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STARBURST™

NORMAN BATES RETURNS IN

PSYCHO II

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
ANTHONY PERKINS

PLUS WARGAMES STAR

MATHEW BRODERICK

PREVIEW OF A NEW MUSICAL

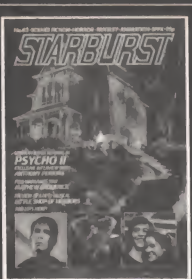
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

AND LOTS MORE!





STRANGE INVADERS



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IN A NEW COLUMN OUR RESIDENT MASTERMIND, DR SALLY GARY, DIGS DEEP INTO HER FANTASY FILM TRIVIA CABINET TO FIND THE ANSWERS TO READERS' QUERIES.

MORE T.V.

I would like to voice a complaint I have about an otherwise exceptional magazine. It concerns Richard Holliss' regular column, *TV Zone*. ... or, rather, the lack of it!

Mr Holliss' column is superbly researched and put over in an interesting and witty style. And yet, *Starburst* seems almost reticent to allow any space for his articles. By the time the feature gets into full swing it is abruptly cut short, usually with a few stils. This means that an article on, say *Night Gallery* (*Starburst* 57) is limited to touching only the bases of the show and skimming on the all important episode guide. Why this particular article wasn't allocated more space is beyond me, especially as the show was instrumental in launching the careers of recently "in the news" film-makers such as John Badham (*Blue Thunder*, *Wargames*), Jeannot Szwarc (*Supergirl*) and Big Steven Spielberg.

One space saving suggestion is to cut down on the reviews of (duck fellas, here comes that genre again) stalk and slash movies. The movies rarely, if ever, break onto the nation's cinema circuit anyway and let's face it, the reviews themselves are becoming as tired and hackneyed as the genre itself. Sure, mainstream dross like the *Friday* *The 13th* ilk are reviewable because we all have a chance to see them, but you could really cut down on reviews of film slike the "*Cricklewood Ballpoint Pen Massacre*" which play only in cinema's that are of doubtful reputation (you know, the ones that have springs coming out of the seats and "men in long raincoats", etc).

So please, *Starburst*, give Mr Holliss at least one more page to work with. Or *Starburst* could be had up under the trades description act... "The Magazine of Cinema & Television Fantasy"... or had you forgotten about the latter?

Mike Jenner,
Hatfield,
Herts.

BOND'S ALL TIME HIGH

I just knew that John Brosnan would hate *Octopussy*. I certainly agreed with him when he said many issues ago that *For Your Eyes Only* was a disappointment, owing much to *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, and that something drastic would have to be done to rescue the series. Where we disagree is that I believe *Octopussy* has done the trick.

I don't think enough credit is given to the screenwriters. The pre-credits sequence, like that of *For Your Eyes Only*, has nothing to do with the rest of the film, but this scarcely matters since the action is so breathtaking. What followed struck me as being more substantial than previous Roger Moore Bonds and does contain elements of Fleming's short stories, *Octopussy* and *The Property of a Lady*. Director John Glen had said that the film would have a complex storyline, which it did, but it was not as overcomplicated as *Thunderball*, and as far as I am concerned there was not the feeling, as in recent years, that the film was dragging.

The action sequences and stunts are

Starburst LETTERS

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superbly handled and mostly original. The only sequence which evoked feelings of *deja vu* was the car being driven on two wheels, as in *Diamonds Are Forever*. The gadgetry was kept to a minimum and I wouldn't describe the sets as "futuristic". The last truly futuristic sets appeared in *Moonraker*.

The villains in the film were not in the same league as Blofeld unfortunately. Louis Jourdan was somewhat miscast as Kamal Khan. Incidentally, I hope that Blofeld returns for real in a future film, since the series badly needs a good old-fashioned "master villain" once again.

Bond himself? Roger Moore is too old for the part now, but having said that, this was easily his best Bond film. Someone younger should be recruited in the future, preferably Lewis Collins, as this would make the fight scenes even tougher. A younger actor, com-

bined with this John Glen-style approach will give the series a new lease of life.

On the last of John Brosnan's criticisms, in what way was the film sexist? *Octopussy's* female troupe storms Kamal Khan's fortresses near the end and they hold their own against his henchmen. Is this sexist? This comment is insufficiently explained. In fact it isn't explained at all.

In conclusion, *Octopussy* is worth seeing for far more than the pre-credits sequence (the budget went on more than that) and the stunts. The standard of acting is high. Desmond Llewelyn is as impeccable as ever in his portrayal of Q, and Maud Adams and Vijay Amritraj are also excellent. Another high note is that the "double entendres" are greatly reduced in favour of a "balanced" approach. The overall feeling is one of satisfaction.

Sean Connery could have his work cut out following this film. After all, *Never Say Never Again* is a remake of *Thunderball* and *Octopussy* is certainly no remake. In any case, isn't Connery too old for the part as well? He has to wear a wig, you know... We'll just have to wait and see!

It would be interesting to see what other *Starburst* readers thought of *Octopussy*.

Glyn Jones,
Wigan,
Lancashire.

THE RICHARD PRYOR SHOW

Well, I've finally seen it... and what I saw, I didn't like. I refer to Richard Lester's hatchet job on the Superman legend in the latest and by no means greatest Man of Steel movie.

In the beginning the *Salikinds* said that they were not going to parody Superman, as in the 1960's *Batman* series, but pay homage to the legend. We were going to laugh with the character not at him. This time I not only found myself laughing at the movie but, more often than not, winning too.

I have to admit, in the words of Han Solo, I had "a bad feeling" about *Superman III* before I sat down, popcorn in hand. The signs were there in *Superman's* last outing (also directed by Lester). I will never forget the final battle ruined by such rib-tickling efforts as the man-with-the-ice-cream-in-his-face routine or the let's blow-the-wig-off-this-guy side-splitter.

Superman III started as it was meant to go on. The opening title sequence treated us to a blind man falling down a man-hole (ha! ha!) and even a custard pie joke, (the whole thing mysteriously blurred optically for a particular annoying credit roll). Later we are treated to the sight of the red and green Pelican crossing men having a fight and, most ridiculously of all, "actor" Richard Pryor sailing off the top of a sky-scraper, falling a couple of hundred feet, landing on a sloping roof and sliding unharmed onto the street below... if a mere mortal can do such a feat, who needs *Superman*?

Superman III could easily have been sub-titled "Richard Pryor Live in Metropolis", as the whole film seemed geared to his over-indulgent comedy routines. Indeed, what could have been the most spectacular episode in the movie - the saving of a Columbian village from a massive hurricane - was reduced to a Pryor monologue leaving me, and a number of others, wondering whether a reel had been lost somewhere.

By far the most pleasing part of *Superman III* were the Clark Kent scenes, mainly due to Christopher Reeve's meticulous work on creating a bumbling, but above all, human character. With Reeve in the driving seat the only resemblance between the Man of Steel and his "Mild Mannered" alter ego is a physique that would shame Charles Atlas. However his most impressive scenes were those as the sick Supes, particularly in the scrap yard battle sequence (probably the most inventive part of the plot)... boy, was he mad.

Plot-wise, the rest of the film was a bit of a disaster, really just a variation on themes. Robert Vaughn played at being Gene Hackman, Pryor was Ned Beatty, and Pamela Stephenson, Valerie Perrine.

Superman III was a major disappointment. What was missing was the wonder. It was as if everybody should now take our hero for granted. There was no more "Look... up in the sky. It's a bird, it's a plane", instead the foreman of a burning chemical factory looks up and says "Oh... it's you". I think it's time Superman, like Chris Reeve, hangs up red cape and starts wearing his undies on the inside.

Paul Butler
Camberley,
Surrey.

PS: Congratulations on your new, improved mag. You may be pleased to know that I'm now a regular buyer each month—despite the nasty things I said in issue 50 (Letters). You must be growing on me... yuch!

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF A SCANDINAVIAN KIND

After having read John Brosnan's article on Time Travel movies in *Starburst* 60, I feel it is my duty to point out that *Reptilicus* and *Space Invasion from Lapland* are not Scandinavia's only contributions to the science fiction genre. The first Scandinavian film of this sort was produced in Denmark in 1917 and was called *Himmelskibet* (Heavenship). In this movie a group of scientists go to Mars in a spaceship driven by propellers. On Mars they discover that the inhabitants have seen the insanity of war and now live a life of peace and prosperity (remember, it was made in 1917). The young and handsome leader of the expedition does of course find the love of his life among the Martians and persuades her to travel with him back to Earth to build a better society.

The film is mentioned by John Baxter in his book, *Science Fiction in the Cinema*. He calls it, "a faintly ridiculous romance".

The next Danish science fiction film—apart from *Reptilicus*—was made in 1969 and called *Mauder de Tankte Ting* (The Man who Thought Life). It was an amazing movie, because it had a first-class script and some really good actors. The story is about a man called Steinmetz who has the unique ability to produce living organisms by sheer brain-power. Unfortunately the things he produces vanish after a short time. To try and solve this problem Steinmetz consults a brain-surgeon in the hope that a little surgery will help. However, the surgeon refuses to operate. Not a man to be let down so easily Steinmetz simply creates a double of the brain-surgeon. The double proves to be more skilled than the real surgeon, so skilled in fact that people start to believe that the real surgeon is an imposter. When the double gets to operate on Steinmetz he proves to be not so skilled after all, and Steinmetz dies during the operation. At the same time the phony surgeon ceases to exist. Unfortunately now the real brain-surgeon has to behave like the double, for the rest of his life, in order to be accepted as the genuine surgeon.

No further science fiction films have been produced in Denmark since then, but early this year a TV series started production. It will be in 13 parts and will feature the adventures of a boy who discovers that his apartment is a spaceship and then goes off into space. The models for the series are being made by British modelmaker Bill Pearson.

Nowway has made two very entertaining contributions to the genre. The first was a 3 part TV series called *Blind Passenger* and was broadcast in 1980. It was about a spaceship that has been sent away by The Galactic Federation to make contact with the inhabitants of a distant planet. On the way home the ship is invaded by one of the most unusual beings ever seen. It is a so called biological computer consisting of millions of molecules, each of which in themselves is a computer. This being can take on any form, and so duplicates one of the crew-members after killing him and dumping the body

in the ship's garbage integrator. The rest of the crew try to figure out who the creature has killed and become increasingly more paranoid. Events become really hairy when The Federation fires a missile towards the ship fearing that it may bring unknown diseases back to Earth.

The next SF contribution was also a 3 part TV series. It was called *Tag den ring og lad den vandre*, and broadcast this year. It is about a Norwegian professor who discovers that the ring he was given on his 21st birthday by his father has an unusual history. He finds out that people who have been in possession of similar rings, bearing a sun symbol, are descendants of an alien race who travelled to Earth because their own planet blew up. The ship in which they journeyed to Earth is positioned at the bottom of a lake, and twelve of the original aliens are still alive and keeping track of the rings which can be used to communicate with the spacecraft. They have lost four of the rings, one of which belongs to the Professor who they hunt to retrieve it.

That was the end of today's lesson, now here are a few questions I hope you can help me get an answer to:

1. In 1978 a movie was released in Copenhagen shortly after the premiere of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The film was originally called *The War in Space*, but to cash in on the success of *CE3K* the title was changed to *UFO'erne kommer* (The UFOs are Coming) for its release. It should have been changed to *The Turkeys are Coming* because this movie was a prime example of Japanese science fiction at its worst. In this film Earth is invaded by an alien race whose home planet is dying, and so need a new home. They have decided that Earth is their kind of place but first the inhabitants have to be exterminated. The space-ark the aliens arrive in is designed like a Roman galley, complete with laser-cannons disguised as oars. I have only been able to find the following information about the film: it was produced by Toho Productions and dubbed by Ken Morita, William Ross and

David Perin. Can you tell me who directed the movie, when it was made and who was the special effects supervisor?

2. Is it true that a movie by the name of *The Omen III* has been made and if so, when and by whom, and what was it about?

3. On the letters page of *Starburst* 60 you have printed a still taken during the shooting of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1979). We see two actors trying to strangle director Philip Kaufman. The actor on the right is Donald Sutherland but who's the one on the left?

Spren Thomas,
Copenhagen,
Denmark.

Your lecture on the history of Scandinavian science fiction films was highly informative, Spren. On to your questions.

1. The War in Space (aka The UFOs are Coming) I think this one might be the Toei production *Message from Space*, directed by Kinji Fukasaku, special effects by Nobu Yajima, with a release date of 1978. If not, then we can't help!

2. *The Omen III* was made under the title of *The Final Conflict* in 1981. The film was directed by Graham Baker, with a screenplay by Andrew Birkin, and produced by Harvey Bernhard. The story is set 20 years on from *Damien: Omen II* and the Antichrist (played by Sam Neill) is out to protect himself against the biblical prophecy of Christ's Second Coming. Meanwhile a bunch of monks are on a dedicated pursuit to destroy him and eventually get a stab at *Damien* with one of the sacred sacrificial daggers. (The Final Conflict was reviewed in *Starburst* 38.

3. The other actor pictured in *Starburst* 60, with his hands round Philip Kaufman's throat, is Kevin McCarthy, star of the original version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, who makes a cameo appearance in the remake.

Any further questions of this type should be sent to our resident clever-clogs, Dr Sally Gary, *Starburst* Data Bank, c/o the editorial address.

The Return of FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett

THE EARLIEST KNOWN FANTASY FILM WAS BY D.W. UG. IN THE DAYS BEFORE RACHEL WELCH AND RINGO STARR ROAMED THE EARTH. UG'S MOVIES WERE BASIC TO SAY THE LEAST...



IN FACT THERE WAS ONLY ONE TECHNICAL PROBLEM THAT COULD EFFECT UG'S PRODUCTIONS.



BACK THEN THERE WERE NO MATCHES - QUEST FOR FIRE!



CORMAN'S FUTURE

For eons, Roger Corman planned a space movie, *Millennium*. "It's postponed in and maybe for a millennium," he told me once. This year, Richard Rush is making it; using the title, anyway. Corman, meantime, flushed with \$16.5 million from selling his New World Empire, has formed a new production company called... you've got it, "Millennium". He's making five movies for New World's new bosses for their opening year. He remains their consultant for two years and can have all his movies released by his 13-year-old ex-combine, if he wishes. He sold up, he says (only the distribution company, not his effects studio in Venice) because he's a film-maker, not a salesman.

"I was making interplanetary adventures when George Lucas was still in school," adds Corman. He's still at it. His Millennium debut, *Space Raiders* (a typically clever title from a non-salesman) is going through the roof. He wanted to pull it from 50 cinemas once the usual American summertime movie blitz began. The cinema-owners said no - "we've more faith in your picture than you have!" His next two pictures, *The Night Stalker* and *Kain of the Dark Planet*, were shot in Argentina, of all places, even though Roger is finally upping his budgets to \$5m, rather than \$2m. Making the sf *Kain* cast in tv's old Kwai Chang Caine, David Carradine.

Next on the Corman slate, two big tv minis, about the Civil and last wars, plus his big plans for *Spider-Man*. Stan Lee is working on the treatment. Like Stan-the-man, Roger-the-Corman believes *Spider* is more popular in comic form these days than *Supie* (He is! - Ed.)

No news of Corman actually directing again, though. "I never intended really to stop," he said last time we met up. "I'd just directed so many pictures in such a short period, I was really tired. I thought I'd stop for a year or two, start my own company... and the pressure of that became so intensive, I'd no time to direct." He doesn't have that pressure anymore. And as he's 58 next April, it's about time he got back into action, wouldn't you say?

Tony Crawlley's THINGS TO COME



A different kind of Kain. David Carradine is made up for his role in the latest project from New World Pictures, *Kain of the Dark Planet*.

MEMO

...For Steven Spielberg: Robert Duvall says he's read one of your next projects, Thomas Keneally's novel, *Schindler's List*, about the German industrialist saving Jews in World War II. And far less laconic than his usual line in conversation, Duvall says, "I must play this part."

SPACE PATROL

Filmland's search for genre heroes is still dusting down old comics - Tanya Roberts is *Sheena* and Warren Beatty wants to be *Dick Tracy* - and, yes, old tv shows, too. After *Star Trek* and *Twilight Zone*, prepare to welcome back... *Space Patrol*? Ivanhoe Productions are shooting the movie in their Kansas City backyard. Don't laugh. Some of it's

promised in 3-D. But what is, er... was, *Space Patrol*, I ask myself. (You, too, huh?). A zero ABC-tv series, circa 1950-55, starring one Ed Kemmer as Commander Buzz Corry and Lyn Osborn as Space Cadet Happy. That'll give you some idea of the quality. It's also said to have "immeasurably enriched the language" via such winning catchphrases as "He's lost his rockets" and "Smoking Rockets!" Gee-whizzeroo!

Ed Kemmer is still alive and well and starring in the film, with assorted guest spots from others seeking rejuvenation of a 50s' fame that I'm sure no one but the Ivanhoes even remembers. Producer Wade Williams, who runs his own Kansas City cinema (he must be short of product!), says the movie will be funny but not camp. With names like Buzz Corry and Happy, he must've lost his rockets.

NEVER ENDING...

Gradually, more news being leaked about West Germany's biggest ever movie - the \$25 million fantasy, *The Never Ending Story*. First, if all goes well, it will eventually be two films. Second, Penguin Books are about to bring out the Michael Ende book in English. Third, shooting is actually underway, with four crews shooting on separate Bavaria Studio sets, in Munich. Main crews are in the hands of *The Boat*'s director, Wolfgang Petersen, and British special effects wiz, Brian Johnson.

"I first bought the rights to the book two years ago," producer Dieter Geissler said in a fleeting Cannes Festival visit. "And I immediately discovered that this film could never be made! The effects were just far too complicated. But Brian Johnson's first remark was: Don't think of shooting, concentrate on preparation. So we've actually been preparing the film since June last year, turning Bavaria Studios into a special effects centre, with the biggest blue-screen in the world!" (Funny, John Dykstra says the same about his matte-screen for *Dune* in Mexico... Fine, fine, but just what about the story is never-ending?)

Well, it seems it's about a young lad who pinches a book that he's obsessed with. The book is about a fantasyland called Phantasia which is on its way out due to a phenomenon known as *The Nothing*. In the book, another kiddie tries to rescue Phantasia and goes through various incredible adventures with, among other Johnson creations, a 12-metre high dragon and a hotel-size rock-eater.

The boy reading all this realises the book's young hero is all he'd love to be - "and the twist comes," said the smiling Dieter Geissler, "when, in a way, the two figures merge and he gets into the magic world and saves it from *The Nothing*."

So far one kiddie only has been signed for the movie - a certain Noah Hathaway. Also cast: British veteran character actress Patricia Hayes! Good for her. This seems the year when our top character folk get their rewards in big movies. For example, Freddie Jones has lately finished playing the

TARZAN'S READY

After six months shooting, compared with eight weeks of *Chariots of Fire*, Hugh Hudson has completed his definitive Tarzan movie, *Greystoke*. It's due for its world premiere across the Atlantic in December. Ironically, Tarzan is the French actor Christophe Lambert while the French explorer who brings him home to his English estates is British - Ian Holm. The movie is one of the most frighteningly expensive this year at \$40 million - to pay for locations in the Camerounes and some 22 artificial apes created by Rick Baker.

South Carolina model Andie MacDowell, 24 and really Rosalie, is the new Jane and Hudson's cast includes Sir Ralph Richardson and Nigel Davenport.

What had started as Oscar-winner Robert Towne's most cherished work is now, according to Hudson, critical of our old role as a colonial power. "It is," he says, "about what we have lost by being in society and how we've developed ways of hiding our real selves." Well, who woulda thunk it? The sad news is that I hear everyone's favourite Tarz, Johnny Weissmuller, is seriously ill at his home in Acapulco...



lead in Fellini's next release, *The Ship Sails On*, and joined *Dune*.

Herr Geissler had another reason for all those Cannes smiles. Warner Brothers have already bought *The Never-Ending Story* for America, Britain, France and Scandinavia. Meanwhile, his next movie ready for action is called... *Satanic Mill*. Sounds right up your street as well!

E.T. HOME...AND FREE

E.T. has had its day in court. And won. Judge Cynthia Hall, of the L.A. Federal District Court, has ruled against any substantial similarities between the film and the 1978 play, *Loki from Malmø*. She threw the case out of court saying that no reasonable jury would conclude the two works were anything but "disimilar". And so playwright Lisa Marie Litchfield lost her mammoth law suit against Steven Spielberg and all other parties in the E.T. party. What got Lisa so angry was that she'd sent her play to Universal in 1979 to be considered as a possible film. The letter back said the studio did not share her enthusiasm for the story's potential. Then E.T. came out... She saw it and counted some twenty four points in common with her work, including her alien's touching farewell on leaving earth, which including touching a kid's head (a girl's head not a boy's head) and promising to be with her there, always.

Even if the case had won approval in this summary court hearing, I doubt if any jury on the planet would have eventually agreed to the writer's demanded damages. She only wanted... \$750 million.

TRON TROUBLE?

Next case please... Well, Your Honour, my client, Daniel H. Risdon, a New York screenwriter - his credits include Al Brodax's animation number, *I Am The Devil* (1975) - alleges that Walt Disney Productions, writer-director Steven Lisberger and publishers of the, er, novelisation, Your Honour, are in the very devil of a mess, as he stipulates, Your Honour, that he is the basic author of what became the motion picture, known and trading as *Tron*... Your Honour. My client will testify that he wrote a screenplay called, *Megalopolis*, *The Computer City*, in 1977 and... er... let me make sure I have this right, Your Honour... yes, and that he showed this scenario to Mr Lisberger in or about that year. Now he sees that the director's *Tron* movie as having taken his *Megalopolis* idea, not to say ideas and... well, Your Honour, he's seeking \$13 million damages, if it pleases the court...

KAUFMAN RETURNS

Missing out on all his mates' glory in recent years - apart from working with Lord Lucas on the *Raiders* storyline - Philip Kaufman is poised for a return to



Coming of Age. After years of playing second banana to homicidal maniacs, Jamie Lee Curtis is allowed to act in John Landis' newie.

JAMIE GLOWS UP

She's not the virginal *Halloween* babysitter any more. Jamie Lee Curtis is 24 and wanting to act it. She does a great job as the happy hooker in John Landis' *Trading Places* and she's back on the horror circuit again soon with *Slumber Party Massacre*, a \$200,000 Corman quickie. But the film that's brought about her most cherished break is *My Love Letters* for the same director, Amy Jones. This is a love story which, for once, Corman left alone - he visited the set once and has, so far, made no changes in Amy's cut. Jamie Lee adores the film, the director (six months pregnant at the time) and her role. "I auditioned over and over and over again for it. I wanted it that badly. These days there's lots of roles written for a lot of great actresses in their 30s - but not many like this for women under 25."

film, and hopefully, form. His first movie since his *Body Snatchers* re-read and *The Wanderers* is the story of NASA's first Mercury astronauts, *The Right Stuff* - based on Tom Wolfe's knockout book. Next, Phil launches his own *Raiders*-style series, based on the books of Talbot Munday about a super-duper Indy-Bond hero called James Schuyler Grimm. His foe is mastermind Dorje - using nature's primal power to wreak havoc with explosions and fires. The film is the hero's nickname: *Jimgirmin*. Which should be a sock in the jaw for Tony Anthony's upcoming 3-D space junk, *Jimbojudd*.

FAST TAKES

Conan writer Oliver Stone has scripted *Wilderness* for *Close Encounters* producer Michael Phillips. Mike also busy on *M*A*S*H*'s FBI comedy, *Workingman*. Looks like his plans for Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy have evaporated... Mike's ex-wife, Julia Phillips, who who says she has the 2010 rights, is doing *Sweet Ginger Brown* instead... Not even Richard Pryor is saving *Superman III* from disaster. The Salkinds just don't understand stars. Should've got Eddie Murphy... Spielberg's favourite French actor, Jacques Dutronc, trying writer-directing. I can remember when he was just another pop singer face... Malcolm McDowell's tv movie, *Arthur The King*, switches title for *Merlin and The Sword* for Euro-cinemas...

Bond people keep on working. Roger Moore's first Bond girl Jane Seymour joins long ago's *Anne Frank*, Millie Perkins and *Simon and Simon*'s Gerald McRaney in Lord Lucas pal John Korty's supernatural tele-drama, *The Haunting Passion*... And the Bond nasty of their film, Yaphet Kotto, has one of the leads in the *For Love and Honour* series (ex-*Bravo*'s *Brigade*, ex-*The Whole Nine Yards*) directed by Gary Nelson, finally out of his *Black*

Hole. Ole Goldfinger, Gert Frobe turns up in Franco Nero's *The Falcon*... Connery's last official Bond girl, Jill St John, is in *The Act* with Robert Ginty... and Carole Bouquet segues from Boorman's *Dream One* to some Italian *Mystere*... But has Cubby heard of the upcoming Rome tv series, *Octopus*?

Batman is going to be re-done in (too much?) style - 20 million dollars' worth... The Arabs has opened their first animation feature in Baghdad, *The Princess and The River*. Sounds wet to me... Ron *Happy Days* Howard must be a water freak. After directing Disney's *Splash*, about a mermaid, he's going totally underwater for an sf epic, *Inner World*... Surprise, surprise, Robert Bloch has novelised the *Twilight Zone* movie. Well, he couldn't do *Psycho II* since he already had that for *Psycho*... The Arabs has opened their first animation feature in Baghdad, *The Princess and The River*. Sounds wet to me... Hey, there's a Turkish pro-

ducer living in London called Erich Akeman. His output includes *Lion Man vs The Barbarian* and the sequel, *Lion Man, Wrath of the Witch Queen*. The mind boggles... Make of this what you will. Stephen La Rocque is directing *Hideosus Sun Demon: The Special Edition*...

Not to be missed, the latest rival to Jane Fonda's workout cassettes. It's called, quite simply, *Sandahl Bergman's Body*.

FUR SURE

Dee Wallace must have an affinity with furry creatures. After *The Howling* and the terrific *Cujo*, she's finished a tele-movie called *Skeezee*... a dog, it says here, with a mission. No wonder she kept missing E.T. in her kitchen. No fur. She and hubby Christopher Stone have a couple of dogs of their own. "Just mutts, rescued from the local dog pound," says Dee. They're called, Rugs and Spirit. For, apparently, obvious reasons.



Walkies! Bet Barbara Woodhouse never had the problems of Dee Wallace in Lewis Teague's film of the Stephen King book, *Cujo*.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

SUCCESS STUDIO

Eight years ago, EMI's Elstree studios was losing a million dollars a year. Then, Andy Mitchell took over running the joint and soon after that a certain George Lucas arrived to make *Star Wars*. And everyone else followed – when there was room. When, that is, Lucas wasn't producing something down Elstree way, whether Han Solo or Indy Jones. Connelly's Bond moved in this year and Spielberg is currently jangling it down there in Herts. Result: Elstree is making a million bucks' profit every year. And that despite spending two million re-building *The Shining* sound-stage after the fire... and much more on some 27 cutting rooms. The stage everyone wants – *The Star Wars Stage* – is booked until September.

If you want it after that for your first project – it only costs \$3,250 a day...

LUCASOUND

Having done his best for visuals and effects, not to mention merchandising, George Lucas has come up with "the first serious advance in motion picture loudspeaker systems in the past 35 years." Lucas' chief audio engineer, Tomlinson Holman, designed the system, which, in technical lease, has "direct-radiator, low-frequency woofers flush-mounted in a wall; constant-directivity high-frequency horns with improved compression drivers; and a steep electronic cross-over network."

George calls it the THX Sound System, what else? It's already been installed in some American cinemas. I suppose the 1138th gets a prize?

BRUCES GALORE

The arrival of *E.T.*, not to mention his Earth Centre, rather knocked the popularity of old Bruce on the Universal Studios Tour. *Jaws 3-D* is changing that, of course. And now Americans and foreign tourists have a choice of Bruces. The one giving you a hell of a fright at Universal – and a whole batch of mechanical great whites in the Shark Encounter section at Florida's Sea World where the movie was shot and, surprisingly after all the film's havoc, is still there. Business, needless to say, is great.

COMING SOON?

John Landis' cablevision compilation movie of old (and new) Universal genre trailers, *Coming Soon*, is on sales on cassette in the States. Here, soon, I



hope. The show's producer, Mick Garis, is into more of the same – only different. He's putting together making-of cable-shows for cassettes, too, on *The Thing*, *Poltergeist* and *Videorome*. Can't really be that long before *Starburst* comes out on tape, right? Then you can really throw eggs and tomatoes at Brosners and the rest of us! And worse still, see how old we all are...

CRONENBERG'S CHOICE

David Cronenberg had a special retro of his career at the 8th Annual Festival of Festivals at Toronto in September. This is the world's largest public festival. David is also selecting some 40 films for a retro called *The World of Science Fiction*. His choices so far are: Jack Arnold's *The Creature From The Black Lagoon* (1954), Ken Russell's *The Devils* (1971), Nic Roeg's *Don't Look Now* (1973), Joseph Newman's *This Island Earth* (1955), Ingmar Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf* (1968), Fellini's *Satyricon* (1970), Fred McLeod Wilcox's *Forbidden Planet* (1956), Bryon Haskin's *War of the Worlds* (1953), Marty Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and, naturally, Nic

Roeg's *Man Who Fell To Earth* (1976), which David Bowie was telling us at Cannes looks even better now than when it first opened.

STRAIGHT HULK

Biding his time for more *Hercules* movies in Rome, Lou Ferrigno flexes his straight acting muscles in the pilot movie of another new Glen Larson series – *Trauma Centre*. Yeah, back to hospitals and all those good-looking medics, again. Star for the pilot, and if it works, the series, is James Naughton, hardly seen or heard of since tv's *Planet of the Apes* series.

CHUCK-LE JONES

Star attraction of the Wiener Festwochen – the Vienna festival, that is – was the father of Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny, Chuck Jones. He was the main guest-lecturer at the fest's gigantic retrospective on animation history – 21 days and 270 cartoons of it! Everything from *Peinture a L'Envers*, made by Louis and Auguste Lumiere in 1909 to Chuck's most recent works. By the time one added this retro to the screenings of other puppet and experimental

animation works – a grand total of 600 films – Vienna had supplied the largest ever animation feast staged in Europe.

Chuck Jones has been feted before, of course. At London, Annecy, Deauville, Harvard and Yale Festivals. "But this beat all," he said. "They even had me sign my name and draw a Bugs Bunny in the guest book of the art museum. I'm down there next to Matisse and Elizabeth R."

BIG BROTHER'S BACK

A matter of months and it's here. The dreaded year of 1984. Expect, therefore, a flood of George Orwell revivals, reprints and re-evaluations, including a £300 edition of all his works, plus a special edition of his 1984 and a facsimile of his original, incomplete manuscript. Orwell wrote this most forbidding of all prophetic sf works, on the Scottish Isle of Jura in 1948. (He simply switched the date around). World sales are said to be in advance of 30-million copies. Big Brother has been translated into De Grosse Bruder, Il Grand Fratello, Grote Broer and thirty other lingo.

The BBC-tv play of the book made Peter Cushing a star long before he began frankensteining, much less sky-dominating; the later 1956 movie, was far less effective. (I mean, Edmond O'Brien...!) I understand that a couple of outfits are now vying to re-make '84; don't know who's won yet. A London gent, named Mark Hamilton, is sorting that out. He's in charge of the Orwell Estate and dealing with countless offers to film and televise the old master's works now that the world has managed to reach '84, more or less intact. BBC, Granada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation are into various Orwellian shows already.

America's most famous tele-newsman, Walter Cronkite, has beaten most of them to it. He's been touring Britain, Denmark, Switzerland – and the U.S. – for a documentary, *1984 Revisited*, investigating how close the world has come to Orwell's future-shock vision of a brutal, totalitarian society of thought-police, rewriting of history (as it happens) and language distortion – war is peace, ignorance is strength, terminal living is dying, remember?

Cronkite quizzes people like Malcolm Muggeridge and *Clockwork Orange* writer Anthony Burgess. He missed out the '84-like countries, where the citizens aren't free to answer questions. What's more, he missed interviewing the real master of Orwellian double-speak – Nixon's old Press man, Ron Ziegler. He's the guy, you might recall trying so hard not to confirm obvious contradictions in Nixon's Watergate statements. He got into such a mess he declared: "This is the operative statement. The others are inoperative." Not so very later after that both Ron and his boss were inoperative themselves. ■

TV: TELE-VICTORS?

Simon MacCorkindale, our ex-Quartermassite transplanted now in Hollywood fantasy, has won the title role in Glen Larson's new show, *Manimal*. That's the one I told you of some time back, about a fellow able to turn himself into members of the animal kingdom. Simon has a tough fight on his paws. The NBC show will air opposite *Dallas* and I'm sure more people will be keen to find out if JR and Sue-Ellen escaped the fire...

Larson's idea of, basically, animals fighting crime has an immediate rival in the same network's *Mr Smith*. This one has Fiddler on the Roof star Leonard Frey as liaison man with the US Government's latest special consultant – an orangutan with a 256 I.Q. and powers of speech, which is more than can be said for many government consultants.



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Hollywood-based and British born, the Crowcroft sisters, Anna and Maria, are full-time friends and part-time contributors to Starburst. This month they log in with mini-interviews with Ken Marshall and Stephen Grimes of Krull and Pamela Stephenson of Superman III. Their coverage of Wargames can be found elsewhere in this issue.



PAMELA STEPHENSON

Flying High with Superman III

Anna Crowcroft ran into Australian born Pamela Stephenson at a recent Hollywood function. Fortunately, she had her tape recorder handy and

managed to corner the actress/comedienne for a brief interview.

Starburst: How did it feel going from virtual unknown to a lead player in a major American movie?

Pamela Stephenson: Well, I've been acting all my life, but the role was scary because it was daring. My character and Superman have a big affair—I wasn't sure how people would react. How have they reacted?

Pretty well. They recognise me on the



streets and I think they know me—so far, no crazies.

Are you Hollywood bound?

Oh, no! I love London and want to remain in there—but I am willing to do any good film parts that come along. I like to keep all doors open.

How old are you?

That's a secret! I'll never reveal!

Why?

I'd like to have a timeless quality and be able to play any age. That's the fun of acting.

KEN MARSHALL

Krull—Fantasy with a Message

Anna and Maria Crowcroft chat with the star of Krull

Starburst: How would you sum up your time making this movie?

Ken Marshall: Well, it was a very dangerous film to make. I did as much as I could of my own stunts, but the locations, horses and so on were pretty scary at times.

Does the film have an underlying message?

Very much so. In one part of the film the short guys says, "I have a long name to make up for my height," and the Cyclops says, "Your deeds are your size." The basic message is that we all have obstacles to overcome and need to be strong and have faith.

How long were you working on Krull?

Six months location shooting—a real long time. We became like a family,



really getting to know each other. I had fun as well as the work.

Are you satisfied with your performance?

Well, no! A typical actor, I would always ask Peter Yates (the director) for just one more take.

Do you foresee a sequel to Krull?

Yes, maybe. There are plans going on now. I'm very superstitious and can't talk about a project until I've signed a contract.

How did you get the part?

I was in China doing Marco Polo for tv. I screen tested in New York and got the lead. I was really happy.

What's next for you?

Well, almost a year of touring the world to promote Krull—I'll be seeing the movie hundreds of times!

Won't that get a little... boring?

Well, it's like my character (the King) says, "We all have our duty to do."

Are you similar to your character in Krull?

I'd like to be that brave and strong, but in real life I'm just a regular guy!



STEPHEN GRIMES

Production Designer of *Krull*

It was a bit like playing god," mused production designer Stephen Grimes when asked about his work on Columbia Pictures' epic fantasy *Krull*. For it, Grimes was given license to let his imagination run wild and conjure up images unrestrained by the demands of realism.

Krull, starring Ken Marshall and Lysette Anthony, is the adventurous tale of a young prince who must journey to a faraway cavern to recover the mystical Glaive, a key to extraordinary powers required to defend his world, and to rescue his young bride, who is being held captive by the Beast. Along the way, he witnesses an incredible array of sights and events, as he struggles to overcome the odds and regain his kingdom.

A veteran of over 20 films, including numerous John Huston, Sydney Pollack and David Lean presentations, Grimes had never before designed a fantasy film. "When I first read the script of *Krull*, I was absolutely fascinated and utterly daunted," he explained. "I

started with the basic notion that *Krull* had to have an unreal, other-worldly quality. It had to be beautiful, dramatic and eerie, with the curious feeling of not being on this earth."

Grimes admits to a variety of different sources of inspiration for his designs for *Krull*. "When I was designing the giant swamp sequence, for example, I couldn't get out of my mind photographs I had seen of the crosses on the battlefields of the Somme in World War I, and the swamp therefore became in parts like a dead and blasted heath, studded with bare, jagged trees."

The swamp was just one of the 23 different sets that Grimes designed for the five-month shooting period that took place at Pinewood Studios in England. Heightening the feeling of an unearthly, timeless other-world, he created a series of extraordinary landscapes, each with its own colour scheme and its own atmosphere.

The giant swamp was built on Pinewood's vast "007" stage, which, at 102 x 40 metres, is the largest in the world. Over five months of construction work resulted in a bleak, ominous landscape of yellow and browns. Swirling white mists stretched across a landscape of clammy sands and foaming pools. Offering an element of warmth to the barren terrain, a patch of feathery reeds and

elephant grass rested in a far corner of the swamp, above which twin red suns glowed over the horizon.

On another part of the planet Krull, in an outside forest, giant trees reach into the skies. Dwarfed by the massive, gnarled trunks, some 22 feet in diameter and apparently over 250 feet tall, Prince Colwyn and his followers camp for the night, thankful for the protection of the surrounding woods.

During the winter months before filming began, 400 sacks of beech leaves were collected from the grounds of Pinewood then dried and stored. Over 3,000 square feet of moss were gathered in Wales and transported to the studio, where, with hundreds of ferns, brackens, fungi and lichen, it completed the realistic feel of the set.

In addition, Grimes was called upon to create rocky landscapes, the Black Fortress of the Beast, and the White Castle of Prince Colwyn. Refusing to crown any one of the sets as his favourite, Grimes asserts that it is with a sense of relief that he now looks at the hundreds of sketches surrounding his office. "During production, I faced an infinite number of details daily - from the colour of the sand in the Widow of the Web's hourglass to the weapons to the robber band to the shades and shapes of the costumes. Now that all my ideas have been translated into cinematic reality, I feel I can finally relax."

A Starburst Interview with **ANTHONY PERKINS**

After over twenty years of playing slightly disturbed young men, Anthony Perkins has finally come a full circle, repeating the role that made his famous back in 1960 – Norman Bates. Alan Jones ran the actor to ground as he passed through London to promote Psycho II.



In 1981 a small independent film outfit called the Picture Striking Company announced they were going to make *The Return of Norman* which, according to the writers/producers Gary Travis and Michael January, was to be based on the main characters contained in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. All they had on their side was enthusiasm. Universal held the rights to that seminal groundbreaking shocker and quickly threatened them with a court injunction. But the interest shown in the announcement by the world's press made Universal ponder the possibility of a sequel and the results are now on your screens as *Psycho 2*.

In my review of the film for *Starburst*, I said that the project would have been inconceivable without Anthony Perkins and although he admits to *Psycho* limiting his career, it was an opportunity he jumped at once he had read the script. Perkins' other films include *The Fool Killer*, *Phaedra*, *Pretty Poison*, *Play it as it Lays*, *The Black Hole* and *Murder on the Orient Express* but still it is for his unforgettable role as the unstable Norman Bates that he is most remembered.

"You must remember that at the time *Psycho* was such an original idea and film and the character of Norman Bates was so unique that in many ways people

thought it just had to be what I was really like. Otherwise, they would argue, why was I chosen? It was so well crafted by Hitchcock that you couldn't help but identify with the character and actor. It did limit my career, there is no question of that, but in all honesty at least I can say I am remembered for one extraordinary role and there are a lot of actors who can't really say that."

So did he have any reservations about repeating the role? "Not once I'd read the script. It really represented Norman's story. *Psycho* was about Janet Leigh's activities and Norman and his mother were brought in more for local colour. *Psycho 2* was his story, and let me tell you, there is nothing like a really good long role because nobody can mess with it – not even the film editor – you sink or swim on what you have contributed."

Was there ever any talk 23 years ago of the possibility of a sequel? "No-one envisaged it at the time. Hitchcock always held a tight grip on his material and I don't think sequels were ever thought of until *The Four Musketeers*, really. He made an occasional remake, but never a sequel. We were encouraged to do *Psycho 2* by his, then, widow. She saw no reason why we shouldn't do it and since she had worked with him so closely for so







Top: Anthony Perkins, all tied up and nowhere to go, in a scene from *Psycho 2*. Above: A portrait of a psychotic looking Perkins as Norman Bates. Insert: In Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 classic a young Anthony Perkins goes about his deadly business outside the infamous Bates Motel.

many decades, I'm sure she wouldn't have made that remark lightly. We also had a wonderful boost from his daughter, Pat, who knew his work intimately and she was wildly enthusiastic. When she saw the finished film she told us she loved it and that meant an enormous amount to us. We wanted to make the film with dignity and it had to match the original in stylistic procedure as well as storytelling and I'm sure if anything had been amiss Pat would have been outspoken about it."

One aspect of the film that Anthony Perkins is clear about is that *Psycho 2* is definitely not a send-up as some critics have stated. "You can't make a film like this as an intentional send-up as it wouldn't be funny. True humour in a film like this can only be extracted out of the dedication and intensity put into it. There was never a chuckle backstage on *Psycho 2*, or the original for that matter, as you just won't get results that way. An audience will not be scared and laugh in relief if you are sending it up. A lot of nervous appreciative laughter comes out of it but you can't plan that. You quote the line 'Norman, the sheriff wants you down at the swamp' but the fact is that the sheriff does want him down there! That is the sort of line that gets more of a laugh the second time you have seen it, like the one from the first film, 'Mother's not quite herself today.' Unless we hadn't been so totally committed to the integrity of the story, it would have been undignified. Hitchcock always referred to *Psycho* as a comedy, not a black comedy, and our director Richard Franklin told me he didn't know what that meant until we had a preview of the finished film. To our pleased astonishment we found people laughing at it as well as being scared by it."

According to Perkins working under Hitchcock wasn't that different to working under Hitchcock. "There were more similarities between the two than differences really. Both were extremely well prepared and both had an enormous intelligence about the technicalities of movie-making. They also had an appreciation of how much the actor can contribute too. Hitchcock used to find me at the end of a working day and thank me even though it sometimes meant he would have to take a car journey to do so. I haven't had that sort of treatment from many people. I think the comment about Hitchcock and actors as cattle had been read by him too much and in *Psycho* he was trying a different approach by stepping down from his remote position and actually working with an actor. I had a freedom with Hitchcock in every area and I could point things out to him without getting the expected withering remark. Franklin realised I knew every facet of Norman's character and as the world's foremost authority on him I felt I could point out what he would or wouldn't do or what words he wouldn't say. My suggestions were always heard, not necessarily acted upon, and that was a good exchange."

How did it feel to walk around exact

duplicates of the original sets and climb the same staircases? "It felt like going home. There was so much good feeling on the film, many of the crew were the same as the original and the producer Hilton A. Green was the first assistant director on *Psycho* so I knew I was in good hands. It was a modestly budgeted picture, which meant the top brass never interfered and in that respect it mirrors exactly the situation with the first film."

What about the climactic blood and gore in the film? "I think it is very restrained, considering the mayhem we filmed was painstaking enough to have provided some unendurable sequences, but I thought it was tastefully discreet. I don't know whether Hitchcock would have approved or not as I only have the remarks of his family to go by but, remember, it was an area he was moving into with his later films like *Torn Curtain* and *Frenzy*."

Was there ever a school of thought that *Psycho* 2 should be filmed in Black and White? "No, because it just didn't seem practical. The film stock we did use,

permitted us to shoot in light so dim that it almost facsimilated a B&W film. In fact we used less light in the colour of *Psycho* 2 than we did in *Psycho*."

My next question lowered the tone of our whole interview according to Perkins. All I asked was how the shock effect at the climax of the film was achieved. This was his reply. "Do you think it is necessary to go backstage and find those things out? That's what is so nice about the movies – you can wonder about them. Obviously I was using a rubber spade but I don't really think that is the point. What was more important to me was how cleverly the spade had been introduced as a heavy, murderous object. Please don't decrease the level of our discussion."

Apart from his fee Perkins hasn't made a penny out of the massive success of *Psycho*. "It doesn't matter. I love the film so much. Hitchcock was in peak form when he made it and I'm glad to have been a part of it. I can't honestly say though that it is my best performance as I can't look at it that objectively. I don't

endlessly run 16mm or video copies of it. You can't categorise the film at all because I truly feel it doesn't belong in any genre. That is why I could never have been involved in a sequel if it hadn't been honourable. I don't begrudge not making anything out of the first film, worries like that only age you."

So is *Psycho* 3 on the cards? "It's a possibility, I suppose, because Norman does survive but when you are making a claustrophobic story like that, with no special effects work or bluebackings to light, you don't have the time to think, so it never crossed my mind. Perhaps two is enough, I don't think we should mine the territory for every last bit of gold dust. It would be nice to leave some of the story unspoken. If you had been set up for a third film you might not have liked it as much so there is that to consider, too. It is important that you parenthesise a movie because personally I would hate to be in a film where the idea of yet another sequel is introduced as it smacks of merchandising and I definitely wouldn't have approved of it in *Psycho* 2." ■



Spielberg Competition RESULTS

Linda Stewart, Inverness, Scotland.
Bill Street, West Didsbury, Manchester.
J. Clark, Lincoln.

Mark Wismann, Llanedryn, Cardiff.
Simon Olsen, Harrow, Middlesex.
John Devonport, Liverpool, Merseyside.
Anthony Waggett, Leigh, Greater Manchester.

S. Birrell, Farston, Liverpool.
David Kerekes, Radcliffe, Lancashire.
David J. Stainsby, Darlington, Co. Durham.
Graham Hunter, Calderwood, Glasgow.
Kirsten Parry, Brentford, Middlesex.
T. Westrope, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.
J. Baum, Chester, Cheshire.
W. Stanier, Stourbridge, West Midlands.
A. Baum, Darlington, C. Durham.
Clive Woodley, North Wheatley, Nottinghamshire.

Andrew Jones, Heath, Cardiff.
David Hutton, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.
Richard Moosbally, Halewood, Liverpool.
Warren Blowes, New Alresford, Hants.
Frazer Diamond, South Park, Bucks.

Below are the names of the fifty lucky readers who have won a copy of Tony Crawley's new book, *The Steven Spielberg Story*, in our competition in **Starburst 60**. The correct answers were as follows:

1. The TV show which marked Steven Spielberg's professional screen debut was **Night Gallery**.
2. The name given to the mechanical shark by the film crew during the making of *Jaws* was **Bruce**.
3. The catch-phrase that was popularised by Spielberg's film *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* was "E.T. phone home!"

We were inundated with postcards, but with questions that easy it was hardly surprising (although some readers did insist the name of the shark was Ben!), so thank you to everyone who entered and congratulations to the winners.

Andrew Tripp, Catford, London.

Amanda Chappell, Darton, South Yorkshire.

Piaros O'Loirain, Goatsdown, Ireland.

Graham Stewart, Kilmacoll, Renfrewshire.

Andrew Evison, Grimsby, South

Humberside.

Richard Brown, Rotherham, South Yorkshire.

D. Daby, Fulham, London.

Jonathan R. Southall, Dawlish, Devon.

Hamid Khan, Sparkhill, Birmingham.

Elizabeth Lorkin, Winchester, Hants.

Paul Jeffries, Thomaby, Cleveland.

Chas Fenwick, Leeds, Yorkshire.

Chris Robinson, Syke, Lancashire.

Peter Higgins, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.

David V. Carpenter, Lovedean, Hants.

Robin Medford, London.

Brian Donnelly, Ramen, Ireland.

J.M. Lawrence, Greenford, Middlesex.

Andrew Kay, Mawdesley, Lancashire.

E. M. Coleman, Dagenham, Essex.

Janette Twist, Lower Gomal, West Midlands.

R. Shaw, Runcorn, Cheshire.

Philip Heppenstall, Barugh Green, South

Yorkshire.

Alison Jones, Thundersley, Essex.

Simon Thorne, Higher Openshaw, Manchester.

Gregory Dunne, Limavady, Ireland.

Michael Spitzer, London.

Nikolai Galitzine, North Moreton, Oxon.

Coming in issue 65: The Twilight Zone Competition Results



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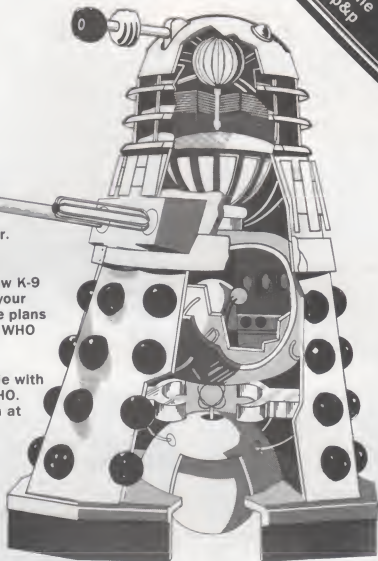
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Takin' Turkey

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL MEDVED

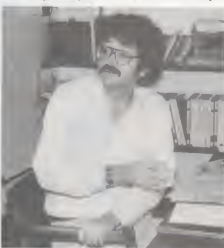
Starburst: What on earth possessed you to write a book on terrible movies?

Michael Medved: The first book started initially as a lark. First of all I should explain that my brother (Harry, co-author of *The Fifty Worst Films of all Time* and *The Golden Turkey Awards*) and I had this fascination for this one bad movie in particular, which became a sort of cult movie in our family. There are four boys in the family. I'm the oldest and Harry is the youngest. When we were growing up there used to be this movie which would appear very regularly on Los Angeles TV on Channel 9 called *The Horror of Party Beach* and it was just so outrageously awful, it was just so stupid that it became a very big cult thing in the family. "Oh! Guess what's going to be on this Sunday... It's *The Horror of Party Beach*!" So it began to be a celebratory occasion. Different brothers would invite their friends over and people would memorise all the lines - this was before any video cassettes or anything - my brother, Harry, got a tape recorder and held it up to the screen and recorded the soundtrack with this outrageous music. It has the *Zombie Stomp* in it. It was just a tremendous amount of fun. Then we found another movie which we made a cult out of shortly after that called *Robot Monster*. *Robot Monster* wouldn't screen as regularly, usually it would only play at about two or three in the morning and so you'd plan everything around having this big social occasion to watch *Robot Monster*. Years later, when I'd begun my career as a writer, my first book had been published and was a best seller in the States (a novel entitled *What Really Happened to the Class of '65*, published in Britain by W.H. Allen), my brother was fifteen at the time and a big movie buff and it just seemed like it would be an easy enjoyable book to do. So I wrote a four-page proposal and sent it around to publishers, I was an established writer, after all! No one wanted to touch it. A book on bad movies - who would be interested? Finally, we found this one fellow, an absolute maniac, sort of an Irish leprechaun publisher who was noted in New York for his belly and his green suspenders, a genuine character, his name was Pat O'Connor and Pat O'Connor was the only publisher in New York who would touch the idea. So we started working on the book and we'd not idea what we'd got into because you actually had to sit through all these bloody movies to find the ones that were bad enough. This was for the first book, *The Fifty Worst Films of all Time*, I found that I literally could not sit through the hundreds of movies we were required to view. My brother did all of that because he was young, idealistic and tough! **What was your criterion for a bad movie?**

Particularly in the first book we tried to have representatives of the different categories of awfulness. We had over-pretentious art films; in the first book we included *Last Year at Marienbad*, which is a film that I particularly despise. I know that it's not like *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. It's competently made and it's artistic, and all that. It's just the biggest pain in the ass to sit through. It's an unbelievably painful experience, I don't even think it's a good bad movie.

In *The Golden Turkey Awards* we started concentrating on good bad movies. For instance, I think *Plan 9*, *Robot Monster*, *Horror of Party Beach*,

Michael Medved is best known for his co-writing credits on two of the most controversial books on cinema of recent years: The Fifty Worst Films of all Time and The Golden Turkey Awards. Medved recently visited London to prepare a special session of bad movies for Channel 4. The season begins in October and features Medved as The Host. The introductions were recorded at London's Scala Cinema before a live audience over four nights. At the end of the recording sessions, Michael Medved found time in his schedule to talk to Starburst and clarify his ideas and opinions on what goes into creating that legendary beast, The Golden Turkey.



Above: Author and Starburst interview subject Michael Medved. Below: Two scenes from *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.



Godzilla, these are good bad movies, they're enjoyable. *Last Year at Marienbad* is just a bad good movie, if you understand the distinction.

In any event, one of the things that we found when doing the research for the first book is that if a film wasn't going to be suitable, if it wasn't going to be bad enough, you could tell right away. I mean if you see a film and during the first ten minutes it rises even to the level of mediocrity, then who cares? Forget it! Let's see something else. You are looking for films that are utterly inept. What happened was that we had a contract for doing the book called *The Fifty Worst Films of all Time* and I remember calling my publisher after we'd been working on it for a year and saying to this gentleman, Pat O'Connor, "I've got a great idea, I want to do a little bit of a title change, I think it will make the book even better and much stronger."

He said, "Well, what's the title change?" I said, "Why don't we call it *The Twenty Worst Movies of all Time*?"

He said, "No we need Fifty", so we proceeded to try and fill in the rest of them. And then what happened was the book was released and became this big sensation and it was very strange because I don't think it's a particularly good book. I think it's rather shoddy workmanship, I'm much more proud of *The Golden Turkey Awards* and the new book we have that's going to be coming out in a few months on that subject. The problem with *The Fifty Worst Films* was that twenty of the films we researched very well and they were very good choices, but then we just had to fill in the others and it's almost embarrassing. We would just look through *TV Guide*, we'd have to look for bad movies and that's how we found movies like *Daughter of the Jungle* or *Jet Attack* which don't belong there, they're stupid movies but they are basically mediocre, not outrageously awful, as they should be.

The best thing about *Plan 9* is that it's a very quotable movie.

Oh, *Plan 9* is wonderful. The reason I say *The Fifty Worst Films* is a work that I'm not very proud of is that we missed *Plan 9*! We didn't know about it. Now how can you do a book called *The Fifty Worst Films of all Time* without including *Plan 9*? It's a terrible lapse in scholarship. We are much more thorough now, and one of the reasons is that at the back of the first book we had the humility to include our address because we wanted people to nominate pictures that we may have missed. We had a deluge of mail from all over the United States saying, "How could you have missed *Plan 9 From Outer Space*?" Literally thousands of letters, so we were humbled and corrected. In the next book we made up for it.

What's the new book going to be called?

The new book is called *The Hollywood Hall of Shame*. It's slightly different from the other books because it's not a book about the worst movies, it's a book about the most expensive disasters in Hollywood history, the movies that have lost the most money, which is a fascinating study in itself. For instance, *Heaven's Gate*, which is not that bad a movie, though it's pretty bad, is an obvious one and *One From The Heart*, which is not a bad movie at all but lost twenty seven million dollars. But it's astonishing, some of these things. One of my favourites



Above: Terrific promotional artwork for the infamous *Wild Women of Wongo*. What's it about? Why, Untamed Maidens Capturing their Mates, of course. Below: A scene from Bodeen's *Billy the Kid vs Dracula*, which starred the evergreen John Carradine in the role of the vampiric Count.



is a German film made in 1944 under the personal supervision of Dr Goebbels and it may be the most expensive movie ever made. It's certainly the only film ever made that gave a direct contribution to the allied war effort because Dr Goebbels assigned 180,000 troops, diverted them from the Russian front, so they could act as extras in this movie, the man was mad.

People become mad when they're making movies ... like D.W. Griffith. The first movie in *The Hall of Shame* is *Intolerance*. It's an interesting movie but Griffith was loco. Do you know that that movie, which was made in 1916, to this day has the distinction of having the largest set ever used in a motion picture? A square mile of Babylon, the walls were 40 feet high - total madness. When it came out it cost 1.8 million dollars. The previous most expensive movie of all time, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, cost 80,000 dollars. This cost 1.8 million to give you some dimensions. We also have an inflation adjustment chart. I think the book will be published in this country in the Autumn.

How much feedback do you get from people if for instance you have included their favourite movie in *The Fifty Worst Films of all Time*. I think in the first book you included *The Omen* for example. Now I like *The Omen*! Why was that classified as one of the worst?

Because we need to fit in thirty other films. I told them they should have done a title change. No, *The Omen* certainly doesn't belong with the *Fifty Worst Films* of all time. One of the things we tried hard to do in that book was to offend everybody and we say that in the introduction, one of our goals is to have some films that will bother everyone. I must tell you that the desperation and panic with which we wrote the last part of the book would be hard to imagine. I really won't defend it. I think *The Omen* is a bad movie, I don't think it's one of the worst movies ever made, it's a silly movie.

It was entertaining!

Yes it was! And it was well made, it wasn't even a big budget, they brought it in very cheaply, which is even more to their credit. *The Omen 2* was hopeless. There are a number of movies that we discovered that obviously do belong there and are good choices. *Tiny Town* does, *The Conqueror* does, *Lost Horizon* does, I think *At Long Last Love* does. Certainly *Robot Monster*, certainly *Horror of Party Beach*, but what we discovered after that book, thanks largely to the letters, was this whole wonderful world of low budget Sci-Fi cheapies, similar to *Robot Monster*, for example the whole Edward D. Wood output.

Edward D. Wood was not a stupid man, was he? Not at all, everyone who knew him liked him very much, he was a lovely gentleman.

We've got this theory that nobody could possibly be that daft, he must have known what he was doing! No, he was that daft, he was. I mean we've now spoken to all three of his wives, we've spoken to everyone who knew him well, the man was a most unusual gentleman. You know he either dressed in women's clothing or in cowboy clothing. He used to wear these leather cowboy outfits with white fringes, spangles and a big sombrero and he would walk into restaurants like that. He sometimes rented horses and would ride to appointments on horses. What he would do is give autographed pictures of himself as either a man or a woman to waitresses, things like that. He was a very flamboyant character. Very literary, too, we have some of his novels which are just dreadful, they are mostly porno things about transvestites. Apparently all of his ex-wives were crazy about him, though he was just a lovely, lovely man, but totally daft. What we've just discovered recently was, you know the famous "let's ball it up in

Albarkirky" sequence in *Plan 9*, the stewardess there was Mr Woods wife at the time, her name is Norma McCarthy. Of course, Delores Fuller who plays Barbara in *Glen or Glenda* was his first wife, and I think it's a tribute to him that Delores Fuller continued working with him even after they were divorced. Tor Johnson, insane as it sounds, was actually fairly well established in Hollywood, he did do a lot of monster movies, and he worked for Eddie because people just loved Eddie. Lyle Talbot was quite an established actor. He had a career on TV playing the neighbour in *Ossie and Harriet*, and he just loved Eddie. Apparently, he was one of those people who, when he got into things, would call you in the middle of the night with his ideas and he did believe by the way, in outer space people. He believed that space creatures were among us. Criswell was a different kettle of fish, he recently passed away so I don't want to be too cruel, but Criswell was a very strange person, extraordinarily strange person and not in a nice way like Ed Wood.

Didn't he have a TV show?

Yes, a very popular TV show.

But didn't he get all his predictions wrong?

Totally! His predictions were ludicrous! He would never even tell people how he came up with these predictions. Someone calculated that percentage wise, even if he was just doing the predictions at random, he could do better than Criswell does with his predictions. The whole point of his TV show was people watched him at the time because he was so very weird. Criswell at the time of his demise was writing his autobiography, I haven't seen it and no one will publish it so far but apparently there's a lot of information about Mr Wood. Dudley Manlove, what a guy! Dudley Manlove was an intimate friend of Mr Criswell's. Dudley is such a great guy, I mean he's just terrific, he's given us stills from the movie and the highlight of his life was appearing in *Plan 9 from Outer Space*, that was his greatest moment. He recalls it very fondly. Apparently an Edward D. Wood production was fun, they just had a great time, because basically there was no script, there was no plan and you just threw up whatever the set was going to be. It was a shame that Wood didn't get to make movies at the end of his life, the end of his life was very sad. He was on welfare.

But someone like Phil Tucker, on the other hand, gets really defensive about his work, doesn't he? Defensive isn't exactly the right word. Phil Tucker is a very strange person.

[section of this interview was dropped because of a delicate legal situation. Then the subject turned to reaction of film folk featured in the Medved books]. We did get one angry letter from William Bodeen Jr. You may remember that we honoured William "One-Shot" Bodeen for creating *Jesse James meets Frankenstein's Daughter* and *Bela Lugosi meets a Brooklyn Gorilla*, *Billy the Kid meets Dracula*. He made 113 movies and all bad, all outrageously bad, and we included him in the book and his son wrote in. But there's a whole sub-culture out there. Ray Dennis Steckler, he's the one that directed and wrote *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed Up Zombies*. He did *The Lemon Grove Kids Meet the Green Grasshopper* and *The Vampire Lady from Outer Space*, he did *The Erotic Adventures of Pinocchio*, which was advertised with the tag line, "It's Not his Nose that Grows". Ray Dennis Steckler has been a great friend of ours, we have been in close contact with him and his wife who, of course, is a star in most of his movies, his daughter, he uses his whole family. He loves the fact that he's gotten a lot of attention, that his films have made a contact, thanks to our books. You included *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*. Wasn't that deliberately made as a comedy?



Clockwise from above: John Carradine as Dracula and victim from William "One-shot" Bodeen's *Billy The Kid vs Dracula*. Another Bodeen picture - *Jesse James Meets Frankenstein's Daughter*. Greeti Teenage Zombies is also known as *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed Up Zombies*. Silly! Santa Claus Conquers the Martians is self-explanatory. Centra: *Plan 9* is demonstrated for the benefit of the alien leader, played by Dudley Manlove.



Yes, but very ineptly.

So it still counts as a Turkey?

You notice that we don't give it an aard, we give it a nomination. We have a category called *The Worst Vegetable Movie* of all time, and clearly the worst vegetable movie of all time is *The Attack of the Mushroom People*, I mean that's an awful movie. But *Killer Tomatoes*, I think, deserved a nomination simply because it is intended as a spoof but it's a terribly inept one. I mean there are spoofs of bad movies that are vaguely amusing. Do you know of *Geek Maggot Bingo*? Well that's a spoof of a bad beach party movies.

The problem is that we have entered an era in which the great days of bad film makers are behind

us. It used to be obvious in the Fifties and Sixties, that anyone with 15 dollars and a camera could go out into his garage and make a monstermovie and today the cost of movies is so high that it's very rare to see something that is totally inept. Although, did you see *Paradise*, did that come out here?

Is that the cash-in on *Blue Lagoon*?

Yes, oh yes, God is it awful! And it's so inept. It's a Canadian/Israeli co-production, the acting, the shooting, the editing! They're in the Sahara Desert, right? And there is a chimpanzee that's wandering around the desert that befriends them, totally nonsensical! And during the entire film the camera only about two inches away from Phoebe Tate's breasts and that's basically what the movie is about.



JESSE JAMES
MEETS
FRANKENSTEIN'S
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TEENAGE ZOMBIES

Let's talk about the Creeping Terror. That's the film where the sound recordist was so drunk all the time he didn't know what he was doing . . .

Yeah, the stupidity is so sincere. I think *The Creeping Terror* is a technically weaker film than *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. The cast and crew were so clearly bumbling. You can see the actors looking off camera in all directions while the monster is crawling up to eat them. The funny thing is that a lot of the people involved in that film, like John Lacky who designed the monster, were actually reputable film people. Lacky was a well-known makeup man in Hollywood. He was very proud of the monster, initially. Apparently the director, Art Nelson, just totally misused the monster.

Art Nelson, maker of *The Creeping Terror*, was involved in a romance at the time, with his costar in the film, Shannon O'Reilly who plays Breck, which is why they make out so much on camera. (Art Nelson also starred in the film). She was a minor at the time, either 17 or 18.

They were travelling around the country in this pink Cadillac and they disappeared shortly after the film's release and everyone had been trying to find them. We do have legal documents from people who have been trying to find them. No one knows where he is, he seems to have disappeared off the face of the earth. There are two theories about where he is today. One of the people he worked with suggested that he might be running a hot dog stand

in Miami and telling people, "You know I used to be a big time Hollywood director . . .", or the more common theory is that he's lying at the bottom of a river somewhere with his feet in concrete, which is what happens . . .

Poor J. Edward Reynolds who put up the money for *Plan 9*, you know his basic dream was to make a film on the life of Christ. Wood's plan, what he said to him was that he would make enough money from *Plan 9*. Wood basically had the Bela Lugosi footage beforehand. Then Lugosi dropped dead and Wood put it on the shelf and then he met Reynolds. He said "look, I've got this Lugosi footage so we'll cut it in, and we'll make a science fiction movie and make millions so we can go on and make the life of Christ with it". Apparently the minister of the baptist church where they all went, Reverend Lennon, he's in the movie too, he also put up 400 dollars. *He's the preacher who's reading at the graveside.* Yes. "The bell has now tolled, for our good friend Inspector Clay". Poor Mr Reynolds never did get to make his movie on the life of Christ.

I think Plan 9 is a pretty good thing to leave behind. OK it's terrible but it's given a lot of people a lot of laughs.

Oh, no question about it and the thing that encourages me is that the people that knew Ed Wood best say that if he were alive today he would be at every Worst Films festival. He would love this, he would come in dressed outrageously and thrive on it. David Bradley, the maker of *They Saved Hitler's Brain* is one who also loves costumes. The two times I've met him, the one time he was with his intimate friend and they were both dressed in little sailor suits with false tattoos, it was very cute and the other time they were dressed as musketeers with big floppy hats and plumes. This is not at costume parties either.

Have you ever mentioned Herschel Gordon Lewis in your books?

Oh, sure we do. We nominated him for a life achievement award for the worst director of all time. *Is that in the Turkeys?*

Yes, he's one of our nominees. We gave the award, of course, to Mr Wood.

Herschel Gordon Lewis - I believe he's still in jail. *But he's another one who's something of an intellectual.*

Yes, but let me put it this way. His business activities on several occasions have lead him to the foul side of the wall. I mean, he was in jail for years for this abortion thing.

Tell us!

Well, he had an illegal abortion clinic in addition to his film production facilities and that's what landed him in jail. I believe he's still in jail - I'm not sure. *What qualifications did he have to run an abortion clinic?*

Absolutely none. It was just the fact that he had done a lot of cinematic abortions. He was doing it was a business basically.

That's a bit frightening.

Yes. Herschel Gordon Lewis, another flamboyant figure (chuckle). Larry Buchanan is an outstanding gentleman who's still working, he made *The Eye Creatures*, and *Zontar the thing from Venus* which is about a killer cumber from outer space and he made *Mars Needs Women*, which is in our series of bad films for Channel 4, he is still working. A lot of these people move back and forth between bad science fiction movies and porno. Not that Mr Buchanan has done that.

I think it's pretty obvious from your books that the golden years of bad movies was during the Fifties. And sixties, early sixties.

Do you have a favourite?

Personal favourite? Yes, *Robot Monster*. I mean

Robot Monster is so pretentious, it's so hilarious, it's so utterly inept, such a hopeless muddle. I think the thing is that Mr Tucker took himself even more seriously than Mr Wood. It's such an intense film. Have you seen the picture?

No, I've not seen *Robot Monster*.

Oh, you have got to see it! It's so serious. That's the one where the robots invade the earth from the moon, with the gorilla suit, the deep sea diving helmet and the television aerial on the head. And the robot soliloquy "I cannot - but I must, I must - but I cannot, how do you calculate that! I want to be like the Hu-man, to feel, to laugh, to cry, why is that not in the plan". (Laughter) You know, stuff like that. Well here they didn't lose the soundtrack, it was just that they were trying to get this poor bleeder inside this gorilla suit and a deep sea diving helmet to do his lines but, of course he had a deep sea diving helmet on and gauze all over his face! So what they did was dubbed the lines in after the fact with a very pretentious Shakespearean actor named John White-Brown. The dubbing wasn't great, you

have things in the movie where there is this great hairy hand that says "I am a ro-man, you are the hu-man!" stuff like that was totally out of synch. And then of course in the middle of the movie there are these dinosaurs which have nothing to do with anything, it was just that Tucker was able to get the stock footage from Hal Roach. It's so pretentious, it's about the end of the world, it's about nuclear war, it's a wonderful movie. I believe by our criterion that *Robot Monster* is right out there with *Plan 9*. I think Steve Wooley (of Palace Video) is planning to release it on video in this country because it should be, it's not known in Britain the way it should be. In the States it's a cult film almost with the status of *Plan 9*.

Glen or *Glenda* is an amazingly bad film, and it is wonderfully sincere. That whole business about hats cutting off the circulation to the hair and causing baldness, you remember that?

I thought the interview sequence with the psychiatrist was quite stultifying, it just went on and on and on.

But also the dialogue is so incredible. They're so serious about it, like Lyle Talbot says, "I mean the suicide of the transvestite", and then the psychiatrist says, "Yesm we all have our idiosyncrasies".

All the Lugosi stuff in that is ridiculous!

He's supposed to be God. It says it in the script, it says, "The Creator."

But none of the lines make sense, it's just a surreal monologue.

Yes, exactly. "Dance to that, dance to that! Beware, beware the little green dragon!" The original *Glen* or *Glenda* was an hour longer than the one that's usually shown. And the stuff that they cut out is the dumbest stuff of all. The dream sequence goes for ever with the devil, who's actually Mr Wood's father. I mean the whole thing is terribly Freudian. All the people are pointing and chairs start floating through the air and then there is this woman being whipped, which is Mr Wood's wife, it's a very, very strange motion picture. And terribly sincere, Wood believed it was a masterpiece. ■



Top Left: The Untamed Women are menaced by a giant prehistoric lizard, Top Right: Our heroines flee through an obviously fake graveyard in *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, Middle Right: Inspector Clay (Tor Johnson) struts his stuff in a scene from the same film, Right: Zsa Zsa Gabor and Eric Fleming in *Queen of Outer Space*, Above: Another horrific scene of mayhem from *Plan 9*.





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Less than two years ago, Matthew Broderick was just another actor on the fringes of the profession, passionately involved with his craft – but hardly expecting to actually ‘make it’.

He was starring in the off-Broadway production of Harvey Fierstein's *Torch Song Trilogy*, which moved off-Broadway and brought Broderick's sudden critical recognition.

He became the recipient of both the Outer Circle Critics' and Villager Awards, as well as raves from such top publications as *Newsweek* ("Teenager Matthew Broderick gives one of the most original, witty and touching performances I've ever seen from a young actor,"), and *Weekly Variety* ("Broderick has a distinctive presence that augurs a bright future.").

While anticipating the Broadway opening of *Torch Song Trilogy* (where it is now a big hit), Broderick was auditioned by esteemed playwright/screenwriter Neil Simon for a starring role in Simon's new play, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*. Simon and Herbert Ross also were searching for a young actor to play Marsha Mason's son in Simon's new motion picture *Max Dugan Returns*.

Unexpectedly, Broderick walked away with both juicy roles. He reluctantly gave up the play, and began filming in *Max Dugan Returns* for 20th Century-Fox – just two weeks after his fateful audition. Within weeks after that film finished shooting, he was starring in one of the choicest roles of the year – as young David Lightman, a high school computer enthusiast who brings the world to the



MATTHEW BRODERICK on **WARC**

Interview by Anna and Maria Crowcroft





WAR GAMES



WAR GAMES

Fact Inside the Fiction
Report by Anna and Maria
Crowcroft



Dabney Coleman as McKittrick in *War Games*.

It was only a tiny beeping sound, but it chilled the men standing duty in the underground fortress that headquarters the North American Aerospace Defense Command.

"The beep came from a computer terminal that wanted to alert the watch officer to its ominous message: Hundreds of Soviet missiles were in the air, streaking towards the United States with their deadly payloads.

"Armageddon was eight minutes away.

"At twenty Strategic Air Command bases across the United States, hundreds of bomber crews scrambled to their B-52s. The technicians who operate nuclear missiles on the ground and in submarines went on alert. The Pacific Command's airborne command post – which would direct a retaliatory strike if the Russian missiles destroyed ground-based headquarters – took off. Andy by telephone, generals at various defense centres around the country held a 'missile display conference' to decide what to do.

"They decided their computers were hallucinating again.

"The bomber crews went back to the barracks. The missile technicians sat down. The command plane landed.

"So ended World War III on June 3, 1980.

"Only casualties: wounded pride."

If it sounds like the scenario for a large-scale Hollywood motion picture, it is. And it also isn't.

The incident, as reported here by Rhonda Brown and Paul Matteucci for the September 1, 1981 issue of *Inquiry Magazine*, made front-page headlines in the world's major newspapers. It happened.

In fact, two young screenwriters – Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes – were working on their first film script at the same time. Their story? A contemporary adventure called *WarGames* about a teenage boy, whose close alliance with his home built computer leads the world to the brink of nuclear war, because he's inadvertently tapped into the American Defense Department's early-warning aerospace computer system (NORAD) and has started a computer programme running which is simulating a Soviet nuclear attack.

Ironically, the news reached Lasker and Parkes during a tense writing session in which they were putting such an incident to paper.

"We were pacing back and forth and going, 'Is anyone going to believe this could happen to the United States' military?'" exclaims Lasker.

Continued from previous page

"And I turned on the CBS Evening News. Walter Cronkite launched into a story. 'For eight minutes yesterday, the United States went on a full-scale nuclear alert, believing that the Russians had launched a surprise missile attack...! We were totally beside ourselves!'"

For those who have a hard time believing that the American way of life came so close to extinction, the following information will be hard to digest: from January 1979 to June 1980, some 147 alerts were registered at NORAD headquarters in Cheyenne Mountain, Colorado.

During 1979 and 1980, NORAD went to the second stage of readiness and called threat assessment conferences on more than one occasion. One was the June 3 incident; another occurred in November 1979, when a computer war games tape was misidentified as the real thing. The Defense Department is still unable to explain how that happened.

Probably more disturbing is the news that the June 3rd crisis was not NORAD's last. The North American Aerospace Command, the central command and control of aerospace defense of North



America – continues to be plagued by false warnings of nuclear attacks, according to *Inquiry Magazine* – some of them computer generated:

"Over one eighteen-month period, 147 'missile display conferences' – the first of three alert levels to evaluate threats to North America – were called at NORAD as the result of the pickup of some physical phenomenon by warning sensors. And sometimes a computer of a piece of communications equipment simply transmits false data. This happens with some frequency," Senators Barry Goldwater and Gary Hart reported to the Senate Armed Services Committee last fall."

As *Inquiry* points out, we may never hear about them. After all, the June 3 incident was exposed only after Defense Communications Agency engineer John H. Bradley (who was subsequently fired and is embroiled in a law suit) jeopardised his career and went to the press. A November 1979 incident became public simply as the result of a reporter's presence at an FAA air control centre when the alert occurred.

Fortunately, the final stage of alert – a missile attack conference – has never been reached.

brink of nuclear disaster in United Artists' *WarGames*.

Within days, Broderick was back on stage – in Los Angeles at the Ahmanson Theatre – rehearsing for the Broadway-bound premiere of *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, where he again scored with the critics.

Soon after the play's opening, a *Los Angeles Times* banner-line read, "Broderick: At 20, He's The Toast of Two Coasts".

The *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* similarly hailed his performance: "The actor's relaxed throw-away style... and his deft comic timing throughout have convinced many playgoers that they are watching a star-in-the-making."

Who is this young man with the meteoric career? Not surprisingly, he is the second generation of an artistic family. Broderick's late father, James Broderick, was a veteran actor of stage, film and television. He is best remembered as the gentle, thoughtful father on the award-winning series, *Family*, which *WarGames* executive producer Leonard Goldberg co-developed and produced. Broderick's mother, Patsy, currently devotes herself to painting, although she originally studied acting and enjoyed a successful career as a playwright and stage director.

Broderick was born and raised in New York City, where he attended City and Country Grammar School. His decision to commit himself to acting came during the last three years at New York's Walden School.

Just prior to graduation in 1979, he made his professional acting debut in HB Studio's off-off-Broadway production of Horton Foote's *Valentine's Day*, co-starring with his father.

He also began studying acting with the renowned Uta Hagen, and voice with





Robert Leonard. Of course, Broderick had been an astute observer all his life, worshipping those summers he spent with his father on location with regional theatre.

"I used to spend a lot of summers with him when he was doing summer stock, just wherever the theatre was — anywhere," Broderick reminisces. "My sisters would get bored, but I would just hang around and watch rehearsals. I just liked being backstage. I loved watching my father on the stage."

Broderick quickly acknowledges the benefit of living with two 'brilliant' parents. He has worked with his mother, in particular, in preparing for auditions and analysing a role.

"She knows how you work on a scene. She took all that stuff very seriously in class (at the esteemed Neighbourhood Playhouse), and she wrote plays and she's directed. She's a great director," he says.

Broderick also had the advantage of growing up around his parents' friends, who were artists or actors. "I grew up in a lifestyle where money was unimportant. It had a big effect on me."

Broderick's latest film role, in *War Games*, will make him the envy of other young male actors. It's a story filled with adventure, suspense and near-disaster.

"I loved it," he enthuses of his first reading of the script. "I was just so excited by it. I mean, I was on the edge of my seat. But the main thing was this was the kind of movie I'd love to see and I'd love to work in."

The young actor admits he didn't know much about filmmaking when he began filming in *Max Dugan Returns*.

"I'd seen my father shoot series and I did two weeks on a film that got cancelled, but the camera was hand-held on that one and you could pretty much



move where you wanted," he says, noting an actor's difficulty in 'making his marks' for a camera.

"I was nervous. Then again, I was real lucky, because the director (Herbert Ross) and Marsha Mason were very gentle with me, and understanding. When I was nervous, they were very good with me. They never made me feel intimidated."

Nonetheless, he says he was intimidated. "Of course. She's a movie star, and there was Donald Sutherland and Jason Robards, my idol of all time," he relates. "So it was a little terrifying."

Working with Robards has probably been the thrill of his infant career, says Broderick. He has reviewed more than once a tape of Robards working with his father in a live television production of *The Iceman Cometh*, directed by Sidney Lumet.

"It was maybe the greatest performance I've ever seen," Broderick swoons.

"He's unbelievable. He's great. He was great to work with! He was so funny. He would have me hysterical, doubling over, almost every day."

When asked to chart his future, Broderick claims, "I would certainly like to do stage, because I still love it. But I'll go wherever the work is."

Broderick is anxious to stay busy simply because he'll get bored, he says. "I don't want to work every minute - I'm not a workaholic. I love doing nothing, like bike riding, and I love to travel. But if you're talking about the rest of my life," he says, in typical fashion for a young man on the cusp of adulthood, "if I have to support a family, I'm going to have to work, right?"

Is Broderick planning on getting married and having a family someday? "Maybe," he says, a bit bashful. "I mean, at some point I'm going to have to pay the rent. I guess when you get older you have expenses, so I'm going to have to

work."

Since major success seems likely to follow Broderick around for the rest of his life, is he afraid it might change his modest ways? "I don't think it will," he muses. "I'm aware that it can happen, but I don't think I'm that type. That's something I learned from my parents."

His father never behaved like the star that he was? "Never," Broderick says emphatically. "Because most of his friends were out of work. I know a lot of great, great actors who never get jobs. And I know there are a lot of awful actors who work constantly. I don't trust it at all, the idea that if you've gotten a lot of work you're important. I don't think that's true. You lucked out, you know. It's somewhat true. It's 60% true. If somebody works a lot, he's usually pretty good. But a lot of times they just have some sort of quality people like. I happen to be 20 years old and I can play 16. I'm lucky that way." ■

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Look out! Here comes Audrey Two. And if you don't know that she is a man-eating plant from outer space, then you obviously haven't heard about the current off-Broadway smash hit musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. It opens in London's West End at the Comedy Theatre on October 12th, and you had better reserve your seats in advance because it looks set to repeat its spectacular New York success—a success that garnered it no less than three awards for best musical and others for the best special effects and best lyrics.

Little Shop of Horrors

THE STAGE SHOW

A Starburst Feature by Alan Jones

Like *The Rocky Horror Show* before it, *Little Shop of Horrors* is a superlatively well-crafted entertainment that is an affectionate parody of social mores, nostalgic pop music and '50s monster movies. The difference here is that it is based on one of the most enduring cult movies of all time, Roger Corman's seminal 1960 classic, *The Little Shop of Horrors*. The film is famous as much for breaking satirical ground as it is for being one of the most efficient pieces of filmmaking ever accomplished as it only took two days to make. Although he only really did it as a bet, Corman now acknowledges the film as the one to establish him as an underground legend in avant-garde film circles and later, as the darling of the critics.

The story is a slight one about downtrodden Seymour Krelboined, (changed to Krelbourn in the show), who works in Mushnik's Flower Shop and saves the business by displaying an exotic plant he bought cheap from a Chinese florist. However the plant begins to wither until Seymour discovers it only thrives on fresh blood and in ever increasing amounts. It soon outgrows its pot and threatens the lives of all those involved when it ominously starts to speak the immortal words "Feed me".

The writer/director responsible for Audrey Two's current incarnation is Howard Ashman who saw the film when he was 14 years old and knew a musical version of *Little Shop of Horrors* was a





good idea. The problem was convincing his agent who thought the film was boring and unfunny. It was only when he played her the score that she realised what he was trying to accomplish with the clever lyrics, an all girl chorus named Crystal, Ronnette and Chiffon and a plant that talked jive. But Ashman and his composer/collaborator Alan Menken stood a good chance of seeing their work go into production as Ashman was the artistic director of a small off-off-Broadway theatre called the WPA.

It was during this run that the show came to the attention of London-based producer Cameron Mackintosh who this year won a Tony award for *Cats*. At 36 he is still known as one of England's youngest producers and with over 100 productions to his credit he has scored heavily with *Song and Dance*, *Tomfoolery* and the hit revivals of *Oliver!*, *My Fair Lady* and *Oklahoma*.

"One day the phone rang and it was friend of mine in New York called Albert Poland who told me that he had just seen the most wonderful show and that I must get involved with it to bring it to London. I asked him what it was about, and when he said a man-eating plant from outer space that talks jive, I said screw London, why not open it in New York?

Apparently he was pitching for the rights on behalf of some organisations for just that end and that if I was serious about it I should act at once. So I rang Gerald Schoenfeld and Bernard B. Jacobs of the Shubert organisation, we were producing *Cats* together, and told them to go and see it. But although they liked it, they thought it was only suitable for off-Broadway. Then we talked to David Geffen of Geffen Records who liked the score and entered our syndicate for the original cast album rights and after convincing everybody that it wouldn't cost too much to put on, we were in business. When Ashman and Menken met the Shuberts they decided that we would give them the best showcase. The irony in this story is that this is only the second time I have picked a show that I haven't seen. I had never had a commercial success in 1975 when I was in New York for the first time and sent some people in England to check out *Side by Side by Sondheim*. That became one of my biggest hits and now I feel I have done the transatlantic tit for tat".

The amount of money it did cost to put the show on in New York's Orpheum theatre was £500,000 and that money was mainly spent on the true star of *Little Shop of Horrors*, Audrey Two.

Complemented by the deep voice of Ron Taylor, Tooeey as the plant is affectionately known, is supposed to be a new breed of fly-trap that looks like an orchid cross-bred with the mechanical shark in *Jaws*, and it goes through four stages of evolution before it engulfs the stage. The plant was the brainchild of Martin Robinson, who as part of Jim Henson's Muppet organisation was a featured puppeteer on *Sesame Street*. Robinson shared Ashman's confidence



Above: A pair of scenes from the New York production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

that it was possible to construct a plant that could talk, eat people and sing rock 'n' roll and set out to meet that brief. At first Audrey is seen as a hand puppet manipulated from below the stage. A larger version is then carried around by Seymour utilising an old vaudeville trick of using a fake arm that seems to be holding the plant. Next it is large enough to eat a sadistic dentist and was constructed by Robinson out of chicken wire and foam rubber. The fourth and largest version spreads out for about 18 feet across the stage and had to be made as lightweight as possible in order to still be able to lip-synch the lyrics without due discomfort and problems. Audrey's crowning moment – and the one most people remember from the film – is when she flowers and the blossoms are the faces of her unfortunate victims.

So why exactly is the musical such a resounding hit? Is it that it follows the proven *Rocky Horror* formula of highlighting and commenting on the B movie traditions it lovingly recreates both at the same time? Mackintosh doesn't think so. "I don't agree with the *Rocky Horror* analogy at all. The real secret of *Little Shop of Horrors* is that it is a thoroughly old-fashioned, well-crafted musical rooted in the great musicals of our time like *Hello Dolly* and *Gypsy*. It has a beginning, a middle and an end and as it is a solid book musical, it isn't a happening or anything freaky in the auditorium. The only thing that is a great surprise is the shock at the end. It all happens on stage and that certainly wasn't the case with *The Rocky Horror Show*. What is bizarre about it is the subject matter and the reason it appeals to so many people, both young and old, is that they are able to watch what on the surface is an outrageous musical comedy in total safety. Also it is very well written. When I first read the script I was amazed at how witty and succinct the lyrics were and how clever the book was. The score hits exactly the right note of pastiche and it bounces along. *Little Shop of Horrors* doesn't rely on anything else but its strong writing".

In the New York production the cast consists of Hy Anzell, Lee Wilkof and Ellen Greene, and Greene might just be coming to London to recreate her much praised role of Seymour's dumb blonde girlfriend. In 1976 she starred in Paul Mazursky's *Next Stop Greenwich Village* and the resurgence of interest in her filmic career may be the only obstacle in the way of her West End debut. The confirmed cast of the London production so far is Barry James who was in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and Harry Towb the popular actor who appeared in *Barry Lyndon* and the musical version of *Bar Mitzvah Boy*. "What I like so much about the show", says Mackintosh, "is its compactness. There are only eight people in it and everyone does everything. Its production values are so simple that it actually delivers a lot more than it promises. It is terribly important not to slick a show up too much and make it more important than it is, which

is why it will be exactly the same production that is playing in New York and now Los Angeles. The only change between here and the two coastal shows is that here it won't be done in the environment of a downtown theatre. The Comedy is a traditional horseshoe theatre with about 650 seats so it will necessitate a bit of revamping. The scale of the theatre is important as we don't want to dwarf the show, which is Ashman's main worry, and finding a house which you can afford to put it in is mine. Here it is going to cost £300,000 and at London seat prices it will only take a limited amount of money. There may be a few American references we may change in the book but there is no point doing that until we get it in front of a preview audience."

Manipulating Audrey Two in this country will be Anthony Asbury, Martin Robinson's assistant. Robinson couldn't come over because of prior *Sesame Street* commitments. And the voice of Audrey Two will also be a black actor imported from the USA.

The original cast album of *Little Shop of Horrors* is available on Geffen Records (GHSP 2020) and is one of the most expensive ever produced. "It cost 1/4 million dollars and it is great. Because David Geffen liked the show so much he spent ages on it and producer Phil Ramone did a remarkable job. I think it is one of the best cast albums of all time which is why we won't do another with the English cast. Let's face it, if Ellen Greene does come over, there wouldn't be much point."

So what does Roger Corman think of the musical? "He loves it and thinks it's terrific. I still haven't seen the film apart from the clip with the dentist operating on a young, masochistic Jack Nicholson. I think it is really strange how a film that some regard as a second rate masterpiece and others as third rate trash should be transformed into an enormously successful show that cost hundreds of times more to produce than the original."

At the moment Hollywood circles are buzzing with the news that *Little Shop of Horrors* looks like it is about to go full circle and become a film again. Could it be true that Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese are involved? "That is all in the realms of possibility," comments the nonchalant Mr Mackintosh. Even if a film version of the show is on the cards, it would be a project with no interest whatsoever to him. "I know nothing about the movie business. I just want to be a punter in that respect. Of course I would have an interest in the film but it would be just that, an interest. Theatre is my only love and musicals are all I really want to do and at the moment I have three on my slate. The new Tim Rice, *Blondel*, a starry anniversary production of *The Boyfriend* and a Christmas fantasy based on old and original songs by Abba called *Abbacadabra*. I can't say I am most proud of *Little Shop of Horrors* or *Cats* because I love every single show I have done."





When make-up artist Bob Schiffer aged Burt Lancaster 50 years for his role as *The Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962), little did he realize it was just a warm-up for *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, the screen adaptation of Ray Bradbury's spine-tingling novel. Schiffer's talents were required to take a 35-year-old man through old age and beyond into the throes of death and disintegration.

The basic premise at the heart of the movie is, "How much would you be willing to pay to have your deepest darkest desires come true?" And when a seductive stranger known as Mr Dark brings his mysterious travelling carnival to Green Town, Illinois, the task of saving family and friends from its deadly and destructive clutches falls on the unlikely shoulders of Charles Halloway, the town's librarian, played by Academy Award-winner Jason Robards. In a climactic sequence in the film, Mr Dark becomes trapped on his own carousel as it whirls madly out of control.

Schiffer is particularly proud of his effects in *Something Wicked This Way Comes*. He feels it is the best and most challenging assignment he's had in his 47 years in film. After carefully storyboarding the sequence, Schiffer supervised the construction of four special crafted puppet heads to take over for the human actor. He spent four months preparing this one scene.

"Nothing like it has ever been done before," says Schiffer. "It was very tricky achieving a smooth transition from a human head to the mechanical one. They had to match perfectly with no margin for error. The puppets were all anatomically accurate with movement in the mouth, cheek and eyes."

Working with Jonathan Pryce in make up



A Starburst Interview with **BOB SCHIFFER**

From Making Betty Grable Look Younger To Making



FFER

Jonathan Pryce Look Older

sessions lasting up to 2½ hours, Schiffer was able to wrinkle and shrink the actor's face into a hollow-cheeked skull-like cadaver for one of the film's most important sequences.

Quite different from the grotesqueries of Mr Dark, Schiffer was also responsible for the make up on Mr Dark's sinister accomplice, the deadly and beautiful Dust Witch, played by actress Pam Grier. The veteran make up artist had to apply silver and gold bases to Miss Grier's body to create different incarnations of character.

Schiffer's experience in make up goes back to some of the legends in film. His early credits include the Marx Brothers' *A Night at the Opera* and *The Wizard of Oz*. In the forties he became the best-known freelancer in the business personally requested by such glamorous starlets as Rita Hayworth, Marlene Dietrich and Lana Turner. Schiffer is generally acknowledged as creating the so-called forties look of red lips and thin eyebrows. Movie makeup's come a long way since then, as these pictures will testify.

Starburst Review Section

STRANGE INVADERS

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Strange Invaders deserves to be an enormous success as it is easily the most enthralling and enjoyable movie I've seen all year. And if it isn't, then there is definitely something wrong with the movie-going public, because it has everything – and more – they could wish for.

It is an affectionate parody of classic alien encounter B-pictures, evoking its deceptively simple premise from *It Came from Outer Space* amongst many others, but brings it slap bang up-to-date by using today's more sophisticated techniques. It is jam packed with exciting incident, marvellous special, mechanical and make-up effects and achieves warmly human comic overtones that spring from the witty and sharply observed script. There are all the expert characterisations you have come to expect too from the intriguing cast comprising of Nancy Allen, Paul LeMat, Louise Fletcher, Diana Scarwid, Fiona Lewis, Michael Lerner and one or two original cast members from *The Thing* and television's *Lost in Space* thrown in for good measure.

Director Michael Laughlin sees *Strange Invaders* as the second in a proposed trilogy started by his *Strange Behaviour* and it is as flawless a piece of text book science fiction that I can remember having seen.

The film opens in the late '50s in Centerville, Illinois, where something very unearthly is about to happen to the small town *American Graffiti* inspired population. This occurrence has far-reaching effects because 25 years later in New York, Charles Bigelow's divorced wife leaves their daughter in his care so she can return to a mysterious funeral in Centerville. When she disappears, Charles sets out to find her but nothing has prepared him for the sights awaiting his arrival that are to lead him on a confusing journey taking him to a lunatic asylum, the offices of a newspaper specialising in scandal, the State Department for U.F.O. research and finally on board an alien saucer where the fate of his daughter will have to be decided.

Strange Invaders is positively aglow with recollections of the past as it recaptures exactly the heady atmosphere and fun contained in its major inspirations. Plot and character development are treated with the same respect and importance as the special effects work and that is its great strength. Laughlin and his co-writer, William Condon, in maintaining the purity of this particular genre make *Strange Invaders* as much an experience to share as *E.T.* was.

In a year full of really excellent films, *Strange Invaders* is going to need good initial word of mouth to set the ball rolling. In capturing the very essence of an era long gone, *Strange Invaders* is a delightful and rewarding film. Oh yes, and remember... Keep Watching the Skies! ■

This page: A selection of nightmarish scenes from Alan Jones' choice for film of the year, *Strange Invaders*. Featuring Nancy Allen (right) as Betty Walker.





Left: David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) gives a demonstration of his expertise with a computer. Above: A portrait of Ally Sheedy as Jennifer.

WARGAMES

A Starburst Film Review by Alan Jones

On no account miss *WarGames*. It's a *Doctor Strangelove* for our times – by turns a terrifying account of Man versus Machine and a warmly human story with comic overtones that reaches out and touches us all in these days of constant nuclear debate.

WarGames is also further proof that director John Badham has made the grade and become a major force to be reckoned with. After a false start with *Saturday Night Fever*, his career seemed to sink without a trace, but with both *WarGames* and *Blue Thunder* in simultaneous release, he shows the same remarkable panache and gift for hard story-telling that Steven Spielberg has.

Here he milks incredible suspense and empathy from a sharp script by Lawrence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes who based their screenplay on a true incident that occurred in America in 1981.

This year's Tony Award winner, Matthew Broderick, plays teenage David Lightman whose genius with computer video games leads the world to the brink of a nuclear war. He thinks he's getting a sneak preview of a new range of video games when he electronically infiltrates into what he believes to be a Californian based computer firm. In reality, he has inadvertently tapped the American Defense Department's early-warning aerospace system and has started a programme running which simulates a Soviet nuclear attack. Is it just a game – or is it really the start of World War III? Only David realises the truth and that he alone can save the Earth from imminent disaster. With time running out, and the FBI closing in, will he find the one man, officially dead, who holds the key? But the mystery man also turns out to be the only person who knows that the *WarGames*, even then, are far from over.

To Badham's credit, the points raised in the movie never get in the way of the supremely well-executed action or tension. Nevertheless, it is an intelligent and thought-provoking entertainment and one that packs an enormous emotional and physical response.

WarGames is, in my book, a perfect motion picture. After seeing it, I doubt whether anyone will be able to look at "Ms Pacman" in the monitor again.

THE SENDER

"A classy, sophisticated horror with lots of bite."

**A Starburst film Review
by Alan Jones**

Until its really confusing ending, *The Sender* emerges as classy, sophisticated horror with lots of bite.

Roger Christian, (art director on *Star Wars* and *Alien*), marks his debut feature with images of such crystal clarity that it is impossible not to be moved or held by them. His thoughtful and thought-provoking approach lifts *The Sender* way above any recent entry in the genre of late.

The Sender in *The Sender* is actor Zeljko Ivanek who after trying to commit suicide is put under the care of Kathryn

Harold's Dr Farmer in an American psychiatric clinic. Soon she is experiencing alarming and nightmarish walking visions literally broadcast to her by the stranger as a way of manifesting his guilt and imparting information too painful to relate about an unknown crucial torment. Enter Shirley Knight as his mother who believes her son to be 'The Messiah' and the tortured key to his suicide looks set to be revealed.

The Sender, based on a fine blend of science fact and science fiction, sets out to disturb and achieves that end with some beautifully orchestrated set pieces complemented by Nick Allder's special effects. Bleeding mirrors, levitation and a subliminal decapitation are all the props needed by Christian to scare the audience by making them pinpoint his characters unease.

Like *Videodrome*, the 'sent' hallucinations on screen are seamless so you are never sure that what you are



seeing is indeed real.

Two other reasons why *The Sender* works so extraordinarily well is the virtually flawless ensemble casting and the truly great score by Trevor Jones.

See *The Sender* if you want evident intelligence behind such facets as scripting, directing and acting. Otherwise stay at home.

It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

I went to see *Return of the Jedi* for the second time. I thought I owed it to good old George Lucas. No, not the £3.00; a second chance. I know how hurt he felt when I give one of his epics a bad review. Okay, so *Jedi* has gone into a quadrillion dollar profit but I can just picture poor George sitting there in his Marin County home nursing a copy of *Starburst* #1 and wondering where he went wrong...

Unfortunately a repeat viewing didn't alter my original opinion; on the contrary it confirmed it. *Jedi* is a series of disappointments and missed opportunities; an unoriginal rehash of the first two *Star Wars* movies. Some good special effects don't compensate for its many low points, such as when Darth Vader is revealed to be Humpty Dumpty, complete with a cracked eggshell of a head (why on earth did Lucas cast a 68 year old British character actor, Sebastian Shaw, in the role?) or when Luke tells Leia they're brother and sister (in that case how come she ended up a princess?).

A second viewing also revealed some lapses in logic that I missed the first time. Like in the confrontation between Luke and the Emperor; the Emperor tries to taunt Luke into using violence against him, saying that if he does the Dark Side of the Force will win. Yet when Darth Vader throws the Emperor down the convenient shaft to his death this action redeems him from the Dark Side. How come? (By the way, I wasn't very impressed with the Emperor. As the symbol of the Empire's ultimate evil I would have thought Lucas and his boys could have come up with something more imaginative than the Wicked Witch of the West).

Another big boo-boo in logic concerns the Death Star Mark 2. We are first told it isn't operational and is being protected by a force field generated from the planet's surface. Our heroes' mission therefore is to destroy the force field generator, which they do, thus making the Death Star vulnerable to attack. But hang on! Later it's revealed the Death Star has been operational all the time, therefore it must have been capable of generating its own force field. In that case destroying the generator on the planet wouldn't have made any difference at all... Answers on a post-card, please George.

Oh, one last question, George. At the end of *Empire* Luke is still only an apprentice Jedi but at the beginning of *Jedi* he's a full Jedi knight. How come? Who did he complete his training with? Certainly not the loathsome Yoda as it's obvious in *Jedi* that the two of them haven't seen each other since the Dagobah sequences in *Empire*. One can only presume Luke took a Jedi Knight correspondence course (and sent away for a replacement light sabre at the same time).

Sorry George, but I have the strong suspicion you and Larry Kasdan cobbled together the plot of *Jedi* in a single wet afternoon (that is if it ever rains in Marin County). It has so many loose ends you could knit a spare Death Star from them.

And now a shameless plug for a book written by a good friend of mine. The book is *Slimer*, published by Star Paperbacks in September, and the friend is a man called Harry Adam Knight. Harry is a rather colourful character who I've known for years; he originally intended to be a priest but realised his interest in the opposite sex would be a serious obstacle to a life of celibacy. He then joined the navy, discovered he didn't like it very much and arranged to have himself dishonourably discharged after a strange incident involving his ship's captain, the captain's cabin, a horse, a bucket of red paint and three Maltese ladies of ill repute (I can give no further details). After a variety of jobs Harry became a stuntman, an occupation for which he was physically unsuited (as he is always the first to admit). A number of minor accidents culminated in a spectacular disaster at Pinewood Studios when Harry missed his airbag while executing a 50 foot fall. Visitors to Pinewood are still shown the impression in the studio floor that Harry made that fateful day.

When he got out of hospital Harry decided that stunt man's life wasn't for him - or rather that a stunt man's death wasn't for him - and became a science journalist instead, despite having no scientific background at all. He's been a science journalist ever since and, somehow, has achieved an impressive reputation in the field.

Slimer is his first novel but doesn't read like one. It's a slick, professional horror story involving a monster that gets loose from an illegal genetic engineering laboratory. The story itself isn't too original, as I'm sure Harry won't mind me pointing out (and if you do, Harry, tough luck) and seems a mixture of everything from *Alien*, *The Thing* (both versions) and *The H-Man* to *Jaws* but the science appears pretty authentic. Genetic engineering is something Harry has specialised in writing about recently and he's associated with a scheme to put a Do-It-Yourself gene-splicing kit on the market.

Harry is already at work on his second novel, also for Star, called *Carnosaur*. This one is about genetically engineered dinosaurs running about in Cambridgeshire and making a nuisance of themselves. Sounds like fun, Harry.

Harry Adam Knight has already been described as Britain's answer to Stephen King. Just who described him this way Harry won't tell me...

But I do know that *Slimer* is a good, nasty read. Go buy it and make Harry glad he never became a priest.



Video FILE

Tape Reviews by Barry Forshaw

A VARIED VIDEO FILE FROM OUR REGULAR VIDEO PHILE THIS MONTH. BARRY FORSHAW HAS FINALLY MANAGED TO LAY HIS HANDS ON A COPY OF DARIO ARGENTO'S *TENEBRAE*. HE ALSO REVIEWS AN EARLY DE PALMA MOVIE AND DINO'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMITYVILLE LEGEND.

ARGENTO STRIKES BACK

In my earlier columns of available videos of the films of Dario Argento, I ended with the hope that I would soon be able to herald the arrival of his latest, *Tenebrae* - and now, courtesy of Videomedia, it's here! Argento enthusiasts can now savour, at their leisure, all the brilliant visual imagination of this Italian master of the horror film - nobody else in the field (even Brian De Palma at his best) can wield a camera with such grace and applied power. Here, a contrived plot and perfunctory characters are effortlessly transcended by sequences such as the astonishing camera "prowl" around the house of two murder victims (described by Alan Jones in an earlier *Starburst*). To the accompaniment of a pounding score by members of Argento's usual collaborators, Goblin, the director forgoes the supernaturalism of *Suspiria* and *Inferno* for a Hitchcockian plot involving a writer (Anthony Franciosa) plagued by a black-gloved murderer. Mention of Hitchcock is very relevant, as his ghost broods over the film (look at the sequence where Franciosa's agent John Saxon waits in a shopping precinct before a murderous knife assault: the steady accumulation of menace through innocuous sights and sounds - shoppers, children - is as brilliantly handled as Tippi Hedren's wait by the school-house in *The Birds*).

The usual snooty critical disdain for Argento in the establishment press is to be confidently ignored by *Starburst* readers - just plug in your hi-fi, turn up the volume, dim the lights, and enter the terrifying Argento universe!

FAMILIAR GROUND

The genesis of Fred Walton's *When a Stranger Calls* (Guild Home Video) was, apparently, a short film later expanded by the director. Walton manages to invest

his formula plot with some invention — as a relatively unmotivated psychotic killer. Tony Beckley invests his part with real pathos, and his shambling, coughing figure is nicely counterpointed by Charles Dunning's over-weight detective, tracking him remorselessly. The finale is pleasingly tense, and makes up somewhat for the complete lack of background accorded the characters. The main problem is the over-familiarity of the material.

GOOD SOUNDTRACK . . .

The producers of *The Omen* could, one would have thought, have sued Alberto De Martino for his *Holocaust 2000* (Rank Home Video) — for their blueprint is followed even more closely than in the official *Omen* sequels. Here the event that must be ensured by the grisly death of any opponents is not the birth of the Anti-Christ (he is already here, in the person of Simon Ward) but Kirk Douglas' unwitting industrial destruction of the world.

Imagination is not in evidence; the murder ideas all being better executed (no pun intended) elsewhere — decapitation by helicopter (*Zombies: Dawn of the Dead*), torso sliced in two (*Damien: Omen II*) — the only element to tempt the prospective renter is Ennio Morricone's score. But, otherwise . . .

A DE PALMA CLASSIC

Polygram Video have put all lovers of superior horror films in their debt by issuing *Sisters*, Brian De Palma's subtletest and most frightening essay in Hitchcockery. Further cause for jubilation is that it is an uncut print (the British censor removed only a small detail — the killer driving a knife into the mouth of a victim — but apart from being a well-judged shock, this ties in with the film's theme of revenge against those characters who prevent both the heroine and murderess from "talking" — even putting words into the young reporter's mouth by hypnotic suggestion).

Nothing else in De Palma's later homages to Hitchcock, though more polished, matches the master's resonances more satisfyingly than *Sisters* — the unabashed borrowings from *Psycho* (early death of sympathetic character, repressed sexuality, investigation that leads a protagonist into a nightmare of split personality) are as well integrated as the various *Rear Window* extrapolations (the whole theme of voyeurism, detailed here as brilliantly as Powell's *Peeping Tom*: the heroine's witnessing through binoculars, of a gory murder is sandwiched by an inane TV game show — called "Peeping Toms" — and a nightmarish Polanski-like hallucination, in which she is forced to "see" the horrific experiences of another character).

De Palma's remarkably assured direction is complemented by some credible performances; In particular Margot Kidder (in her pre-Lois Lane days) as the French-Canadian Siamese Twin whose separation from her sister is the source of the fatal plot-twists, and Bill Finley (later De Palma's *Phantom of the Paradise*) giving

(for him) a restrained and effective performance. But the real star of the film is its authentic Hitchcock ingredient — Bernard Herrmann's brilliantly terrifying score — a stunning object lesson in film dynamics for today's synthesiser brigade.

AMITYVILLE PREQUEL

Once having said that *Amityville II* — *The Possession* (Thorn/EMI) is better than its predecessor, one is obliged to add two things — (a) this cannot be called a difficult achievement and (b) the attraction of the sequel (or rather prequel) can be more attributed to the spectacularly disturbing make-up effects of John Caglione Jr, than to Damiano Damiani's direction.

It transpires the the Lutzes (the murdered family mentioned in the first film) are the first victims of their house's cellar — which is rife with fly-crawling demonic spirits. And the ultimate possession of the older son (Jack Wagner) is the source of the film's final blood-letting as well as the aforementioned

effects sequence, in which the demon claws away the putrefying flesh from the possessed host's face.

The family unit and its conflicts are skillfully drawn, in particular the clash between son and brutish father (Burt Young, re-treading his *Rocky* persona) — so it is particularly irksome that the inevitable outcome (the son's blowing away of his father's head with a shot-gun) has been censored. All that remains of what was apparently a striking special effect is an almost subliminal shot of a blood-stained wall.

James Olsen's priest is given some guilt feelings about not helping the family sufficiently, but these have not one iota of the force Jason Miller's similar concerns in *The Exorcist* had. The incestuous relationship between the brother and sister has a genuine charge. So, while Damiani's over-busy camera may at times distract, the film exerts a grip throughout — and I promise you will not forget the image of the blazing-eyed demon bloodily emerging at the end. ■



TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss

This month's TV Zone turns the clock back to 1981 to look at the tv anthology series *Hammer House of Horror*, which has been enjoying repeat screenings in selected ITV regions throughout the country.

The story behind the idea of a horror anthology series created by a major movie studio dates back to the late Sixties when Hammer Films joined forces with 20th Century-Fox to produce a series of supernatural tales entitled *Journey to the Unknown*. The show survived only 17 segments before it was finally axed due to poor ratings. The series fared only modestly on the other side of the Atlantic. American audiences had become used to anthology shows with a regular host, and in any comparison with *Thriller* or *Twilight Zone*, *Journey to the Unknown* came in second.

But this disappointing track record didn't deter ITC company director Jack Gill. He remembered how popular Hammer Films had been at the cinema and gave the go-ahead for a new anthology series which would capitalise on the notoriety of the Hammer movies. Since early 1970 censorship laws had become far more lenient as to what could appear on television especially with regards to sex and violence, so it was decided that with the new format, original stories could be written for the series without having to depend on the more traditional Gothic classics.

Roy Skeggs who had produced many of the Hammer cinema films explained why he felt the time was right for a new series: "In the cinema we (Hammer) turned to other subjects, but horror thrillers never really went away. Now they are more in vogue than ever and here is an opportunity to bring all the Hammer blood and gore up to date."

Skeggs even managed to tempt several old Hammer stars back to the fold, including Peter Cushing. Other star names included Denholm Elliott, Eleanor Summerfield, Jon Finch, Marius Goring and Diana Dors. Skeggs was also careful enough to keep the stories out on location rather than depending on a studio set-up, something which occasionally stilted the original Hammer films. One such location was Hampden House at Great Hampden in Buckinghamshire. Resembling a castle it featured prominently in the opening credits.

Unfortunately, all these promises were short-lived and the series was cancelled after one season. Roy Skeggs still maintains, however, that audiences want escapism. "The younger generation adore horror stories," he adds, and that is why rumour has it that Hammer Films are working on another tv series.

The *Hammer House of Horror* was made in 1981 and was produced by Roy Skeggs, story editor was Anthony Read. The episodes were as follows: *Witching Time*. A beautiful young witch from the past brings terror and destruction in to the Twentieth Century and threatens to possess the occupants of a small farmhouse.

The House That Bled To Death. A couple living in a house decide to fake a haunting in order to make a lot of money. But they are unaware of the effect that their play acting has on their young daughter. Unwittingly they turn her into a psychopath.

Visitor From The Grave. A girl who believes her husband has been killed in a car crash becomes the victim of a cruel plot to turn her insane.

The Silent Scream. A convict just released from prison finds himself a caged victim of a crazed Pet Shop owner. Even though he manages to escape, his evil employer pursues him to the grave.

The Carpathian Eagle. A macabre legend accompanies the activities of a fiendish killer as bodies are found with their hearts ripped out.

Children of the Full Moon. A week in the country for Tom and Sarah turns into a nightmare as a devilish werewolf cult seeks to possess them.

The Mark of Satan. Creatures that will not die threaten to destroy a worker in a hospital mortuary by turning him into a disciple of the Devil.

The Thirteenth Reunion. A girl/journalist finds she is in danger of being consumed by a weird group of men and women at a strange health farm.

Rude Awakening. A man dreams of murdering his nagging wife, but suddenly finds that his dreams become reality and the reality becomes dreams until his very soul is in terror.

Growing Pains. A couple are terrified by events that reach out at them from beyond the grave. Their dead son is trying desperately to teach them a lesson about love and trust, something that is sadly missing from their lives.

Charlie Boy. A young man foolishly jokes about placing a curse on his cousin. He is more than successful and unleashes a monstrous force that threatens to destroy him.

The Two Faces of Evil. A family on holiday unwisely gives a lift to a mysterious hitchhiker. After a car crash the man assumes the identity of the husband and the whole family find themselves in danger of losing their lives.

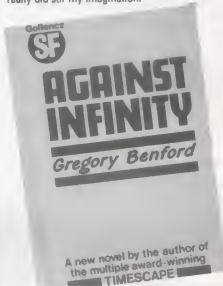
Guardian of the Abyss. An old mirror in an antique shop contains the secret doorway to another dimension. The shop's owner gradually finds himself caught up in a terrifying evil.

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles

It's been my opinion for some years now that science fiction is displaying all the symptoms of a decadent genre. By this I mean that there seem to be few new ideas about these days and few authors of traditional sf who are prepared to write fiction which is strongly grounded in real science and technology while at the same time being peopled with believable characters. Many writers who remain loyal to the genre simply employ all the old motifs and ideas as backdrops to stories which are often no more than the sf equivalent of family sagas or seat-of-the-pants thrillers; meanwhile the more able and ambitious writers have moved to the borderlines of the field and are producing work which eludes ready categorisation but which is certainly not the kind of science fiction we used to know. The old "sense of wonder" which the best sf is supposed to evoke appears to be in pretty short supply these days; perhaps it's now become exclusively the province of film makers such as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

There are, however, a few writers who are still trying to produce challenging work which remains true to the best spirit of science fiction. Gregory Benford is one such writer. His last novel, the well-received *Timescape*, was a serious if sometimes laboured portrait of modern scientists with a strong sf idea at its centre. His new novel, *Against Infinity* (Gollancz, £7.95) is a study of human and alien technology, and while I don't think it's entirely successful I welcome its appearance because it really did stir my imagination.



Set on Ganymede, a moon of Jupiter, the crux of the story involves a young man's various encounters with an alien artifact which has been travelling across the surface of the moon for aeons and whose purpose and function is unknown. In fact Benford never quite succeeds in satisfying the reader's curiosity about the artifact, but the novel does have a convincing sense of atmosphere and contains lots of small but telling scientific details which help create a realistic portrait of the human society on the moon. This is, in fact, its main achievement; it conjures up a sense of the hostility of Ganymede's environment and puts in perspective the efforts of the humans who are attempting to impose their meagre technology on a universe which they scarcely understand let alone can control. The sense of wonder is authentic here, and the novel is to be welcomed for this alone.

Joan Vinge is a more typical example of the modern sf writer. She is committed to the genre and writes books which I'm sure she sees as being in the best tradition of sf. She's popular, has won several awards, and will no doubt win many more. But her latest novel, *Psion* (Futura, £2.95) seems to me to exemplify much of what is wrong with sf today; it's all flashy surface but lacks real substance and ambition.



Psions are people who possess mental abilities such as telepathy and telekinesis, and the novel follows the attempts of various such people to thwart the schemes of an evil psion. Vinge throws in a few other ingredients such as a precious super-heavy metal and a bunch of noble semi-spectral aliens, but the focus is on the psions' mind powers and the problems these cause. Most of the cast tremble on the verge of some angst throughout, and while Vinge does creditably go out of her way to avoid a pat ending, I couldn't help feeling that shorn of its sf trappings this is the stuff of romantic fiction since all the characters' overriding obsessions come down to a need to be loved and admired.

It all seemed a bit flabby and arbitrary to me, not least because Vinge never defines the limits of her characters' powers, thus enabling her to contrive practically any ending she likes. This makes everything too easy and too pat; overall the psions' powers seem no more than an excuse for Vinge to write an sf version of a psychotherapy novel about the problems people have in relating to one another. Even telepathy can't make a woman love you, she seems to be saying in this book. This is a pretty trite message and in any case - how does she know?

The Fall of the Russian Empire by Donald James (Granada, £1.95) details the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late eighties as a result of internal pressures. This is a well-researched novel whose main achievement is to remind us that the USSR is not a monolithic entity but comprises a variety of nations and ethnic groups, many of whom are antagonistic to the Russian Slavs who control the state machinery. In this novel food shortages and a power struggle in the wake of Brezhnev's death precipitate a gradual breakdown in law-and-order which ultimately leads to the various member states of the Soviet Union such as Georgia and Armenia declaring their independence.

Events in the real world have already overtaken the early part of the story, but in broad terms the scenario presented by the author is plausible enough. However the book is too long, and the author has chosen a semi-documentary format which requires a single character to discover diaries or papers written by a variety of people who all happened to play prominent parts in the sequence of events he describes. This strains the reader's credibility a bit, and I can't see why it was necessary - the various stories could have been told direct. This is an uneven book, containing some good

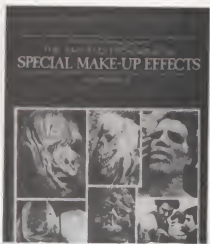
Film Book WORLD

by Phil Edwards

Welcome to the first of an irregular series of columns which will keep you up to date on the latest releases in the world of books and publications devoted to fantasy films. Many of the items I'll be reviewing will be American imports and in some cases may be difficult to track down, although most of the central London specialist shops often carry these titles, so a letter (accompanied by a stamped self addressed envelope, of course) to any of the shops listed at the end of the column should bring a response.

Comic book adaptations used to be all the rage some years ago with the likes of Dell and Gold Key often turning out comics on even lesser quality films. But apart from films like *Star Wars*, *Raiders* and the occasional Disney offering it's a form that seems to have slipped from popularity recently. It's therefore refreshing to see George Romero's *Creepshow* turn up as a comic adaptation, although with a £4.50 price tag it's a long way from the Dells one used to pay a couple of bob for a few years ago. It's fitting though, that *Creepshow* should get the comics treatment, for it was the wondrous world of E.C. Comics like *Tales from the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror* which prompted Stephen King and Romero to get together in the first place to make the movie. Sadly I found the film of *Creepshow* lacking in the light touch and sense of morality which made even the friskiest of the E.C. output so entertaining, with only the last two tales, *The Crate* and *They're Creeping Up On You* having any of the punch of even the lesser E.C.s. I must say though that the stories work somewhat better in the comic form, mainly thanks to cult artist Bernie Wrightson's artwork. Along with Jack Kamen's cover (Kamen being one of the original E.C. staff) the book is a slick production with good colour reproduction, and makes a fun memento of a less than satisfying film.

Tom Savini is a make-up artist who seems to have developed into something of a minor cult over the last few years thanks to the word spread by *Fangoria* magazine. He's also written a book which seems to have one of the longest titles I've yet come across - *Grande Illusions - A Learn By Example Guide to the Art and Technique of Special Make-Up Effects from the Films of Tom*



Savini. Let's just stick to *Grande Illusions*! Savini was inspired to the world of make-up when he saw *The Man Of A Thousand Faces*, which featured James Cagney as Lon Chaney Snr in an entertaining, if less than accurate, biopic of the tormented actor. Like so many people working within the genre today, Savini was further inspired by *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine, once edited by Fory Ackerman, now a sometime *Starburst* contributor. Savini fooled around after school, making himself up and studying the craft of the make-up experts. Savini got his first professional break on Bob Clark's *Deathdream* (AKA *Dead of Night*, among several other titles) and from there it was something of a rollercoaster to success and cult popularity with such films as *Friday 13th*, *Deranged*, *Maniac*, *Eyes of a Stranger*, *The Burning*, *Dawn of the Dead*, and *Creepshow*, most of which had audiences either gasping in awe or reaching for a barf bag, depending on their sensibilities. In *Grande Illusions*, Savini traces all his work through a wealth of behind the scenes pictures, pre-production art and how-to diagrams. In many ways the book is something of a breakthrough of a kind in that Savini is only too willing to give all his secrets away, including where to get materials, although this aspect is only applicable to American readers. Although *Grande Illusions* seems a bit slim (136 pages and paperback) and expensive, something around the

passages and others which are simply padding. Nevertheless the author has done sufficient research to provide his readers with some idea of the realities of life in the USSR from the inside. Ronald Reagan could do worse than read this one.

Constellations edited by Malcolm Edwards (Penguin, £1.50) is an oldies but goodies collection containing short stories from the likes of Arthur C. Clarke, Bob Shaw, Robert Sheckley, Kurt Vonnegut

and others. This collection was originally intended as a compilation for younger readers, and there's a Puffin edition with the same cover and contents on sale at £1.25. A good introductory volume this, like the Kingsley Amis anthology which I reviewed a few months ago, though old-time readers will be familiar with most of the stories. However I think it's about time that some enterprising British publisher produced an original sf anthology.

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Film Book World

by Phil Edwards

£8 mark it is certainly worth getting if you are in any way interested in make-up and make-up effects. My only negative feelings about the book though have to do with Savini's writing style, which comes over as somewhat amateur. *Grande Illusions* suffers because of this, and it's a pity that Savini didn't get a professional writer to help him out, for had this been the case then the volume would certainly have to be regarded as a classic of its kind. I should also point out that *Grande Illusions* is also one of the most disturbing books I've seen in quite some time, for although Savini goes to some pains to point out that he doesn't like gore for the sake of it, the pictures continued within its pages are among the grisliest and most bloodthirsty one is likely to see. With many of them in colour, it's not a book I would recommend for after-dinner reading. You have been warned!

I vividly remember the first time I visited Forrest J Ackerman's Hollywood Hills mansion a few years ago. John Baxter had warned me, 'You'll get lost! God, you see people wandering around that collection like they've been looking for the way out

for days!' Baxter was right. I was simply floored by the scope of the collection Forry has gathered over the years, all to do with the worlds of science fiction, fantasy and horror. Complete runs of all the classic SF pulps jostling for space alongside just about every SF book ever published in any language. Tons of rare movie posters and stills, rooms full of them in fact; props, miniatures and paintings. Thank heaven for FJA, to have all this memorabilia under one roof is something that future historians of the genre will be ever thankful for.

The only thing that ever bothered me about Forry was that he didn't write more... you know... serious stuff. But as Affable Ackerman pointed out to me, getting the now dead *Famous Monsters* out every month as well as the literary agency work he does and just running that massive media archive took up all his time. On the death of Boris Karloff, Ackerman turned out a book called *The Frankenscience Monster*, which was less than satisfactory, although as the author points out it was nothing like his original and serious manuscript. Forry's new book though at last delivers the promise of the man who probably knows more about 'magi-movies' than anybody. *Mr Monster's Movie Gold* contains very little in the way of text, although what there is full of the author's rather oddball wit. Rather, *Movie Gold* is a collection of stills, the like of which I've never seen before. Here, for probably the first time ever are rare stills from *King Kong* reproduced in crystal clarity, Lionel Atwill's face of fear from the original *Mystery of*

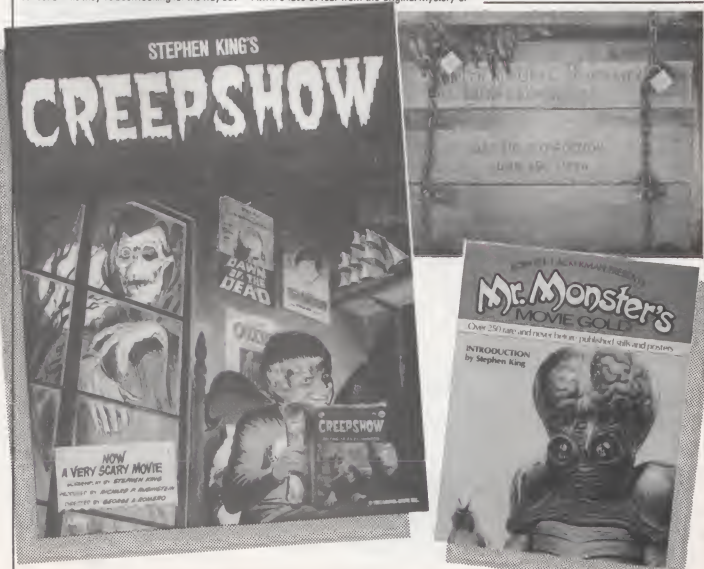
the Wax Museum, extraordinary stills from *Just Imagine*, a chapter on Chaney as a foretaste of Ackerman's next outing – a book on the Man of a Thousand faces with a thousand pictures of the legendary Lon, and intriguing images from such long forgotten films as *The Sky Splitter* (1922) and *Third Dimensional Murder*, an obscure 1940 Pete Smith short in 3D which featured a Frankenstein Monster. Another section of *Movie Gold* is devoted to some of Ackerman's rarest autographed stills and another to the illustrious visitors to the Ackermansion, located of course in Horrorwood, Karloffomia. Although *Mr Monster's Movie Gold* may not be to everybody's liking, it captures the spirit of the man who fostered a whole breed of film makers; Landis, Dante, Spielberg, Rick Baker, Tom Savini and many others have all at some time paid tribute to FJA. *Movie Gold* can't be called an indispensable book really, but it is sheer delight.

THE BOOKS:

Creepshow by Stephen King. Artwork by Berni Wrightson and Jack Kamen. Published by Plume (U.S. import) Paperback, £3.50.

Grande Illusions by Tom Savini. Published by Imagine Inc. (U.S. import) Paperback £8.25.

Mr Monster's Movie Gold by Forrest J Ackerman. Published by The Donning Company (U.S. import) Paperback £7.95.



From somewhere on the Editor's desk: Over the years we, here at *Starburst*, have received literally tens of thousands of letters asking us questions about everything from the cup size of Sybil Danning's bra to what was the real budget of *ET*. Some of you hoped to curry favour by including a return envelope. Two of you even included a stamp. Well, with four tons of mail just begging to be answered or turned over to the waste merchants, we decided to institute a sort of question and answer column. We asked our regular contributors . . . John Brosnan replied, "Ye gotta be kidding - whatta my going to say when some idiot Trekkie asks me if Bill Shatner wore a wig in Season Two or something?" Richard Hollis noted for his height and passing interest in Walt Disney said, "Sorry, too busy compiling my column on *Beverly Hills Bloopers*." Alan Jones was asked, Phil Edwards declined on the grounds of temporary insanity. We wanted to ask Alan Murdoch but couldn't reach him. Tony Crawley phoned in from Alaska where he was attending a film festival of uncompleted Western Borowczyk movies. His reply, "Non, monsieur MacKanzie. Je suis tres snowed under!" And of course yours truly is above that kind of thing ("there aren't enough hours in the day" and so on).

With the threat of seeing the art department looking like Mount St Helens at Christmas I decided the best idea was to ask around fandom - you remember fandom, when people actually liked movies and talked about them in oh, places like pubs, discos and conventions. After much searching and a welter of negative replies we found somebody. But there's a problem - our new resident columnist is actually a doctor and medical ethics being what they are, she can't reveal her name. Well, not her real name anyway. Die-hard convention attendees have probably seen her win a begrudging second prize in costume parades where she is known as Zaida. Our new columnist says of herself and her new column, "Days I spend inside people's bodies, making them better. Or at least I try. Nights I get to be the real me. I guess it all started with *Forry Ackerman* and *Famous Monsters*. I just absorbed all those facts, and wanted to know more. I can't promise to answer all the questions I get sent but I'll give it a try. What's more, the most interesting question each month will receive a free fantasy film poster of some kind. (We'll choose - what do you expect for nothing - Ed.) So come on gang, let's have those questions!"

Two questions from Paul Redmond of Congleton in Cheshire: "How many times did Boris Karloff portray Frankenstein on screen and, can you give me the address of Universal Studios in America?"

Not that old chestnut again! Haven't you people heard of a library, or the British Film Institute, or maybe you can't read? There are several good books on BK including *The Films of Boris Karloff*, *Boris Karloff and His Films*, *Dear Boris* and a lengthy chapter on him in *Heroes of the Horrors*. As to part two, no, we don't give out information like that so please don't bother asking us any more. Check out *Variety* which is published weekly (daily in USA) or try writing to UIP in London - they're the distributors of Universal product in England. You'll get their address from the phone book (you do know the phone book, don't you?) or Directory Enquiries. Next.

Richard Warren of Milsa End wants to know: "What's the most valuable movie poster in the world?"

Well, oddly enough (or not as far as we're concerned) the most valuable poster is for the science fiction classic *Metropolis*. Only a few are known to exist and *numero uno* of all the posters produced on this film is the German three sheet which clocks in at over six feet tall. Designed by Schultz-Neumen its current street

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary



value is something over twenty thousand dollars. Various collectors are saving their pennies right at this moment.

"When is *Videodrome* going to be released?" is a question several people have asked, including David Johns of London; Karen Werner of Birmingham and Mike Hendler of Walthamstow.

Sorry, Cronenberg. After unspectacular returns in USA, David's weird movie is on the back burner as far as local distributors are con-

cerned. Unless it gets picked up by one of the more enterprising (or imaginative) small distributors in Wardour Street, the likely place for it to show up is (ironically) on video. Let's hope DC has more luck with *The Dead Zone*.

Jerome Newton of Sydney, Australia (who said *Starburst* doesn't get around!) is suffering from that terrible condition of remembering everything about a movie but can't place the title. "Basically, it's about a city that rises out of the sea and there are giant crabs running about."

Come on, felle - I thought you remembered a lot about this piece of junk! Sounds like the 1953 RKO cheapie *Poor People* which got a revival in '57 as *Beast of Paradise Island*. Under either title it's a turkey. Directed by Harold Daniels - you remember Harold Daniels! - it featured Anne Kimball, House Peters Jr and James Warren (so that's what he did before *Famous Monsters*). Talk about an all-star cast here, gang. Recently sold to Channel 4 for 25 pence. Watch out for it and whatever you do - MISS it!

We still get mail about fantasy female supreme, Barbara Steele. Some of the questions really just aren't fit for publication, even if I knew the answers. But Roger Weatherall of Surrey simply wants to know what our Babs has done recently. Er, not a lot apart from a bit of television and the simply awful *The Silent Screem* a couple of years ago. I'd hate to start a rumour, but how about a remake of *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* with Le Steele in the Bette Davis role and Martine Beswick as Joan Crawford?

Margaret Lamon of Kent wants me to list all the screen credits of Richard Matheson.

Felt a bit bitter about this one and more than tempted to throw it in the bin and pretend it got lost in the post. But here goes anyway. It probably isn't complete, Mr M is what can only be called prolific, so any additions from Mathesonophiles are welcome.

Twilight Zone: The Last Flight, Third From the Sun, A World of Difference, A World of His Own, Nick of Time, The Invaders, Once Upon a Time, Five Characters in Search of an Exit, Little Girl Lost (which bears a similarity to *Poltergeist*), Young Man's Fancy, Mute, Death Ship, Steel, Nightmare at 20,000 Feet (which featured a pre-Trek Bill Shatner), Night Call, Spur of the Moment, Boris Karloff's Thriller: The Return of Andrew Bentley.

Star Trek: The Enemy Within.

Rod Serling's Night Gallery: The Funeral, The Big Surprise.

TV Movies: *The Night Stalker*, *The Night Strangler* (1971 and '72 respectively which due to their high ratings - the former garnered the top ratings ever for a tv movie at the time - got turned into the tv series *Kojak* - *The Night Stalker* which didn't get picked up for British tv, reportedly, because the title was too similar to *Kajak* and might confuse viewers!), *Dracula* ('75) with Jack Palance woefully overacting as old Feng Features, *Duel* ('71) which was more Matheson than Spielberg and was based on the scribe's original short story that first appeared in *Playboy* magazine, *The Stranger Within* ('74), *Trilogy of Terror* ('74) although for this RM only scripted the last and best tale, "The Devil Doll" with Karen Black and provided the original stories for the first two. *Dead of Night* followed the next year, which despite its title was not a remake of the classic Ealing movie.

For the Big Screen: *Incredible Shrinking Man*

('57) from his own novels, *The (Fall) of the House of Usher* ('60), *The Pit and the Pendulum* ('61), *The Raven* ('63), *Comedy of Terrors* ('63), *The Young Warriors* ('68) from his own gripping wer novel, *The Devil Rides Out* ('68), *De Sade* ('69) a film best forgotten, *The Legend of Hall House* ('73) from the novel "Hell House" by RM, *Night of the Eagle* ('62) which was called *Burn Witch Burn* in USA and based on Fritz Leiber's "Conjure Wife", *Fanatic* ('65) which for its US release became *Die, Die My Darling* and marked a comeback of sorts for Tallulah Bankhead, *Somewhere in Time* ('80) from his novel "Bid Time Return" and finally the script for the Landis, Spielberg, Dante and Miller *The Twilight Zone* movie. Metheson's most famous novel "I Am Legend" has been (unsuccessfully) filmed twice. First was *The Last Man on Earth* ('64) which featured Vincent Price as the title character beleaguered by vampires and was made in Italy. The second adaptation was '71's *The Omega Man* and had Charlton Heston (SF cinema's wouldbe Everyman) besieged by atomic mutants led by Anthony Zerbe. Sadly, a script for "I Am Legend" which Metheson himself wrote for Hemmer Films in the late 50s was turned down by the British censor as too grim. All that remains, somewhere one hopes, is some test footage and the script. Nobody, to date, has attempted to film RM's last published novel, "What Dreams May Come" which details the adventures of a man after death as he travels from the bliss of heaven to the depths of hell in search of a suicide's soul.

Berry Wilson-Smythe of Dundee has come up with an intriguing (and prize-winning) question: "Why is it, when I tape two movies on a three hour video tape from television and they run 90 minutes apiece, I've always got some tape left over?"

That's some handle you got yourself there son. But I'll answer this vexatious question for you. There's two answers, really. One is that the movie has been cut - that's the easy one, the other is a bit more technical. Film, when shown in the cinema, runs through the projector at 24 frames per second. However, when films run through the tele-cine device for tv screening, they run at 25 f.p.s. which, of course, gets the celluloid through the gate faster, therefore making the film shorter. It also screws up silent film in a slightly different way. Silent film was cranked through at 16 to 20 frames per second depending on the skill of the camera operator (it was known for operators to get excited by fast action and crank like the dickens, thereby speeding the film up). When sound came in and the 24 f.p.s. standard was established for the (then) best optimum speed for sound reproduction, silent films suddenly looked like they had St Vitus' Dance. To get around this, silent films were "step printed", that is, every other frame was printed twice to stretch the action out, optically. Not wholly successful, the aesthetics are even more a-kilter when run through that damn silly telcine (try that one after a few drinks, friends) at 25 f.p.s. If you went to work out how long a film will run on television then here's an easy equation: Take the film's original running time and multiply by 24 then divide by 25.

Kevin Daniels of Torquay asks, "How many versions of *The Phantom of the Opera* have there been?"

Not as easy as it looks. Gaston Leroux penned the original novel (in French) which was made



by Universal end of course starred Lon Chaney as Erik (1925). Claude Reins took over the role in the '43 Technicolor remake which, though it had more opers than Phantom (Susanne Foster and Nelson Eddy just about sang me to sleep last time I saw this film), had a dandy crashing chandelier sequence. In 1944 Universal turned out *The Climax* with Boris Karloff, which bore several resemblances to the tale as well as the warbling of Miss Foster. It also bored the audience, though the Technicolor was attractive. In '62, Hemmer Films turned out a pinch-penny version with Herbert Lom skulking the corridors of what looked like the local Odeon. Embarrassingly for Hemmer it only garnered an A Certificate. Brien DePalme's 1974 outing, *Phantom of the Paradise* gave the story a rock setting and was originally to be called *Phantom of the Filmore*. William Finley played the composer who has his (rock) music ripped off. The same year saw a tv movie called *The Phantom of Hollywood*, directed by Gene Levitt. This had a monster on the loose in an old movie studio which is up for sale. Meltin's tv Movies called it, "Silly but watchable." An Argentinian film from 1955 called *Phantom of the Opera*, despite the title is not a Phantom movie; neither is the Mexican film of 1959 of that same title. However, the 1965 Mexican flick, *Santo Contra el Estrangulador*, definitely borrowed from Leroux' version. Completists

are probably aware of a 1930 music and fx rissue of Chaney's version, so I won't mention it here.

Bernard Chendler of Newton Abbott has come up with a real dilly of a question: "Has Michael Anderson ever made a good film?"

Well Bernie, this one really had me stumped. Rether than attempt a *sensible* reply, it's simpler to list the men's credits: *Waterfront* ('50), *Hell is Sold Out* ('51), *Night Was Our Friend* ('52), *Will Any Gentleman* ('53), *House of the Arrow* ('54), *The Dam Busters* ('55) probably his best film, at least the Royals seemed to like it at the time, 1984 ('55), *Around the World in 80 Days* ('56), *Yangtze Incident* ('56), *Chase a Crooked Shadow* ('57), *Shake Hands With the Devil* ('59), *Wrack of the Mary Deere* ('59), *All the Fine Young Cannibals* ('60), *The Naked Edge* ('61), *Flight From Ashiya* ('62), *Wild and Wonderful* ('63), *Operation Crossbow* ('65), *The Quiller Memorandum* ('66), *The Shoes of the Fisherman* ('68), *Papa Joan* ('72), *Doc Savage* ('75), *Conduct*



Unbecoming ('75), *Logan's Run* ('76), *Dominique* ('78) and let's not forget that great contribution to the smell screen *The Martian Chronicles* ('79).

Lynette Green of Luton wants to know, "How many times has Superman been portrayed on the screen?"

Tricky one, Lynette. According to Alan Barbour (author of several good books and small press publications on serials including *Cliffhanger* and *The Serials of Columbia*), Superman's screen debut was to be in the twelve part serial from Republic, *The Mysterious Dr Satan* (1940). However negotiations fell through with DC Comics and the tale was revised as a vehicle for a Republic masked hero called Copperhead. Meanwhile, the Fleischers picked up the rights to Supey in '41 for a series of animated cartoons which in the opinion of many were the best adaptations of the Man of Steel's adventures, produced in glowing early Technicolour. The serials did get around to putting Bulging Biceps on the silver screen, though it was Columbia (unfortunately) who won DC over. *Superman* (15 episodes, 1948)

starred Kirk Alyn in an ill-fitting suit and not very much muscle as our hero, with Noel Neill as Lois Lane. This was profitable enough to prompt a sequel, *Atom Man vs Superman* which went fifteen rounds in 1950 and featured the same principal players. With the law of diminishing returns in operation and the death of the serial at hand, this marked the last of Superman's big screen adventures in the serial format, although these chapter plays got cannibalised into a couple of feature movies some years later. In 1951 a feature film called *Superman and the Mole People* (... *Strange People* in England) appeared. This starred George Reeves as half the title role and Phyllis Coates as Lois Lane. This then turned up in late '53 as a two-part episode of the popular tv series of *Superman*. In this incarnation it ran over two episodes and was called "The Unknown People." George Reeves survived all six seasons of the show then tragically took his own life in June '59. Coates disappeared at the end of the first season. Her replacement? Noel Neill! And for Superman

trivia buffs, it was Noel Neill who appeared on the train that Chris Reeves raced in the first of his Superman films. She was playing Lois Lane's mother (that's the little girl who looks out of the window) in an intricate sub-plot which probably appeared in Mario Puzo's original script and was jettisoned at some point (phew, complicated, heh gang?). Anyway, back to George Reeves' series. ... prominent directors of the series were George Blair, Harry Gerstadt, Phil Ford, Lew Landers and George Reeves himself. Apart from a radio series which featured the classic, "Up, up ... and AWAY!" (voiced by Bud Collier) whenever thunderbolts took to the air, there's also been a stage musical, *Is It a Bird...*? which itself got turned into a filmed-for-TV version but other info on this (apparent turkey) is hard to find. Then, of course, there's the most recent *Superman* movie series and, if you wanna be even more complete, there's also the accompanying TV shows, *The Making of Superman* and *The Making of Superman 2*, etc, etc.



Top: The original screen Superman, Kirk Alyn, in *Atom Man vs Superman* (1950). Above: George Reeves portrayed The Man of Steel on TV. Right: Christopher Reeve, as the most recent Superman, is zapped by a computer in *Superman 3*.



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